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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

**SCENES OF TOGETHERNESS:
A CREE ELDER'S PHILOSOPHY OF HEALTH AND HEALING**

By

RACQUEL TANIA WOOD



**A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION**

In

**COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY
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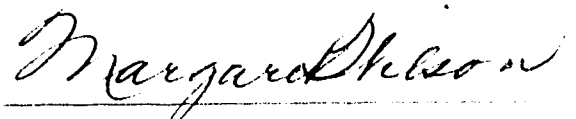
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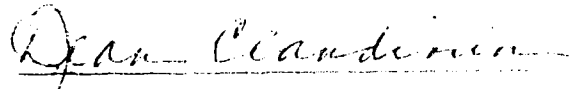
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **SCENES OF TOGETHERNESS: A CREE ELDER'S PHILOSOPHY OF HEALTH AND HEALING** by **RACQUEL TANIA WOOD** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **MASTER OF EDUCATION** in **COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY**.



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Date Approved: February 9/96

DEDICATION

For

DR. ANNE ANDERSON-IRVINE

With Wisdom and Courage

She Preserves Our Past and Guides Our Future

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Abstract

Native Elders are the wisdom-filled teachers of culture and tradition within Native communities. Elders model, and live in accordance with, the correct ways of achieving health and healing; by doing so they provide those around them with a sense of continuity and connectedness between their past, present, and future. This understanding of a Native Elder's role formed the basis for this research. By using the narrative inquiry approach -- that of studying the way a person experiences the world by examining their constructed storytellings -- I set out to study one Cree Elder's narrative storytellings. My purpose was to gain an understanding of this Elder's personal philosophy of health and healing by examining the way in which her philosophy was reflected in her storytelling about her traditional way of life. My examination of the way in which Dr. Anne Anderson-Irvine constructed her life-stories was directed by the storytelling elements of plot, characters, and scene.

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I would like to extend a most sincere gratitude to my research committee. Thank you Peggy for believing in my search -- this I carried with much meaning. Jean, your guidance and generous words of praise inspired me throughout. And Dustin, your vision gave courage to my purpose since the very beginning. I am also grateful for Dr. Stewin's interest in my research as well as his willingness to join us along the way.

I would like to thank my parents and brother for supporting my goals ... and for sharing with me their pride and love.

Greg, you have truly shared in this journey with me ... and I am ever grateful for the laughter, strength, and love you brought into my life.

~ ~ ~

Dr. Anne

I thank you for your friendship and kindness.

Your willingness to share of your storied-life ... has changed mine forever.

Kitatahmihin.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Research Question

The Native/First Nations' view of health and healing is one which is solidly based upon the interconnectedness of both the physical and spiritual world. Accepting this interconnected state of existence with both the physical and spiritual world is the driving force behind Native health and healing -- it is that which can provide a healthy or unhealthy mind, body, and spirit (Ross, 1992). Health, from this perspective, is viewed as the achievement of harmony and balance with oneself, nature, community, and the spiritual realm (Rutledge & Robinson, 1992). Thus the framework in which health and healing take place in this culture is far reaching. The Native philosophy and practice of health and healing are integrated into all aspects of traditional Native life, unlike the segregated view of medicine and health held by the dominant Canadian culture. This study was an attempt to gain an understanding of the all encompassing Cree Indian philosophy of health and healing as various aspects of one Cree Elder's traditional way of life were explored in a narrative fashion. The question used to direct this research study was as follows:

How is the Cree philosophy of health and healing reflected in one Cree Elder's storytelling about her traditional way of life?

Purpose Of The Study

My intent in pursuing this narrative research was to learn of the Cree philosophy of health and healing within a contextualized and personalized framework. I used the narrative inquiry storytelling approach in order to capture a detailed and personable

account of an 89 year old Cree women's unique life experiences. I wanted to present a gathering of this Elder's life-stories in a creative, readable, and informative manner since her stories were reflective of her philosophy of health and healing. My aim then was to capture the essence of her personal philosophy of health and healing as she gave voice to her life-stories. With this goal in mind, I employed her narrative storytelling in order to reflect the interconnectedness of her past, present, and future while also portraying the significant life-characters and scenes which influenced and shaped her philosophy of health and healing. Through these narrative tellings I was then able to portray the very threads which spoke of her traditional way of life and, in turn, her health and healing philosophy.

This research study attempted to move beyond the commonly taken approach, that of offering a more generalizable explanation of the Native world view; instead my goal was to capture a personalized and contextualized account of one Cree Elder's philosophy of health and healing as reflected in the unfolding of her life-stories. Based upon the highly personalized nature of this research I have left it up to the reader's discretion to decide upon the transferability of this perspective to other contexts.

Significance Of The Study

This research study was undertaken for two important reasons. First, I wanted to further my understanding of the Cree culture as it is a part of my own cultural heritage. This research study afforded me the opportunity to explore a perspective of my own cultural heritage, that of the Cree philosophy of health and healing, in an in-depth and flavorful context.

This research was also significant because it provided for a closer look at another world view. I felt this was important because recognizing and understanding other world views is the initial step towards having respect for others. Understanding other world views is especially important for counsellors if they hope to work in accordance with, and

demonstrate respect for, a client's cultural framework. I feel that we as counsellors, as well as anyone else working in any capacity with differing cultural groups, have a responsibility to both ourselves and to the people we come into contact with to become informed -- and in doing so sensitized -- in regards to the various ways of understanding the world we live in.

Definitions

Cree Indian

The Cree make up the largest Native language family in Canada (McMillan, 1988). They comprise part of the Algonquian tribe in Canada (Leitch, 1979). The majority of Cree people currently occupy a large stretch of land ranging from Quebec to the Rocky mountains and from Great Slave Lake into Montana, U.S.A. (Leitch). The Cree originally resided between the Red River and Saskatchewan River in what is now the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. During the sixteenth century the Cree expanded their boundaries northward and westward as they acquired firearms (Jenness, 1977). By the middle of the eighteenth century the Cree occupied northern Manitoba, northern Saskatchewan, northern Alberta, the southeast area of Great Slave Lake, and the Slave River valley (Jenness). Raids during the eighteenth century brought some Cree into the Rocky mountains and as far north as the Mackenzie River near its delta into the Arctic Ocean (Jenness). During the 1800's their numbers were greatly reduced due to war and smallpox (Jenness). In the late 1800's the Canadian government placed the Cree Indians on reserves located throughout the prairie provinces (Jenness).

Native Elder

The term Native Elder requires defining since there are clear distinctions between being elderly and being an Elder (Wilson, 1994). Wilson's study of Alaskan Native Elders

outlined three key roles which Elders fill, thus distinguishing them from the elderly. Wilson also described three distinct characteristics which seem to define a true Native Elder. Wilson's delineating definition of a Native Elder, described below, was found to parallel similar findings voiced by other writers on the topic (Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992; Meili, 1991).

One role a Native Elder holds within the community is that of a respected teacher (Wilson, 1994). Wilson described this teaching role as one in which an Elder shares of their traditional and cultural knowledge in order to teach the next generations. Another role held by a true Native Elder is that of acting as a model for the way the people of the community should live. In this sense an Elder not only shares of their wisdom in order to advise and teach ways of being but they also live by these same codes of conduct (Wilson). A further role Elders take responsibility for is that of providing their community with a sense of connectedness and continuity between their past and present (Wilson).

Knudtson and Suzuki's (1992) description of a Native Elder's role resonates with many of Wilson's (1994) same sentiments. Knudtson and Suzuki described an Elder's role in the community by stating:

Throughout human history, [Native] elders have occupied a special position in society. They have painstakingly accumulated reservoirs of personal experience, knowledge, wisdom -- or compassionate insight and a sense of the enduring qualities and relationships around them. They freely offer this wisdom to living generations of their people in an effort to help them connect harmoniously with their past, present, and future (p. 179).

A further definition of a Native Elder was offered by Dr. Anne Anderson-Irvine -- my research participant. Her definition, like those above, emphasized the importance of a Native Elder's role as a teacher of tradition and knowledge in order to inform their community of the link between past-present-future. These are her words, as told to me, describing an Elder:

An Elder is quite of age -- quite high in age and an Elder also has some great knowledge of past history. An Elder knows about their beginning and what has happened to them. An Elder has to have history and knowledge of their age. They know the history of whoever they belong to, like a certain town or people, in case they are asked about that. So being an Elder is more than age -- it's knowledge.

Wilson (1994) outlined three main characteristics commonly shared among well respected Native Elders. Aside from the obvious quality of being of old age or a grandparent, Wilson stated that true Native Elders are open to sharing their cultural and traditional knowledge with others. By freely sharing their knowledge the Elders make themselves accessible to their community (Wilson). A second characteristic common to Native Elders is their concern for their entire community as well as the individuals which comprise it (Wilson). A third characteristic outlined by Wilson was that of an Elder's keen sense of the spiritual, moral, and physical when considering issues -- that is, an Elder's holistic approach to making sense of the world (Wilson).

These same characteristics were eluded to by Meili (1991) while describing the similarities noted in the Native Elders around Alberta, Canada. Meili gave a specific account of these commonly found personal characteristics:

They had much in common, but most significant was a deep concern for young people. They urged teen-agers to get an education and take their rightful place in the patronizing, dominant society, taking the best from Native and non-Native worlds. The elders live prayerful lives in the arms of the sacred, some blending Indian and Christian beliefs learned from their mission school days. All have strong work ethics and are active in their communities, health permitting (p. x-xi).

Meili's account of these characteristics closely mirrors Wilson's (1994) description in that there is again a focus on the Elders' deep concern for the community, their willingness to share and give guidance, and their spiritual approach to life.

A Native Elder then is defined by the fulfillment of certain roles. Those roles

being: 'community teacher' of culture, tradition, and heritage; 'community model' of healthy and wise standards of behavior; and 'community link' between the past and present in order to provide a sense of connectedness to the past and direction in the future. A Native Elder is also defined by certain characteristics, those being: an openness to share of their knowledge; a concern for their family and community; and a holistic approach to understanding the world.

These defining characteristics and roles have been attributed to what Knudtson and Suzuki (1992) refer to as "genuine wisdom" (p. 180). Knudtson and Suzuki credit Native Elders with this truly special quality since it is that which provides Elders "with the capacity to feel, to exhibit compassion and generosity toward others, and to develop intimate, insightful, and empathetic relationships." (p. 180).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

World View: An Orientation Toward The World

The concept of world view has been defined as "a way of constructing the world and making meaning" (Ivey, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 1993, p. 99). A world view is essentially a frame of reference by which an individual understands the world. There are four main elements which influence the way in which a person views the world. These elements are: one's unique life experiences, one's family experiences, one's cultural experiences, and one's sense of sharing in a universal humanity (Ivey, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan).

Metaphorically, these four elements act like differently tinted eye glasses through which individuals view the world (Ivey, Ivey, and Simek-Morgan, 1993). The influence of one's cultural "glasses" will therefore influence the manner in which one sees and makes sense of the world. In order to better understand another person's world view an examination of their cultural "glasses" is then required. This, in turn, explains the inherent necessity in examining the Native world view -- since it is a world view vastly different than that held by non-Natives.

A Traditional Native World View

Healing from a Native perspective is viewed as the search for harmony with, and between, the physical and spiritual world (Ferrone, Stockel, & Krueger, 1989). Health is viewed as the achievement of harmony and balance with oneself, nature, community, and the spiritual realm. Therefore the Native approach to healing is one which considers the components of mind, body, emotions, and spirit, on two interconnected planes of reality --

the physical plane and the spiritual (Perrone et al., 1989). This Native world view is one which is heavily influenced by these interconnected forces in the spiritual and physical world. Halfe (1993), a Cree social worker, emphasized the uniqueness of this interconnected world view as she stated that:

We Indians live in a world of symbols and images where the spiritual and the commonplace are one ... the concept of working with the mind, body, emotions and spirit is a concept that is poorly understood by many people, though very familiar to the Indigenous community (p.8).

Many writers have reported that a Great Spirit is recognized among traditional Natives as being the supreme Creator who has the power to influence life in both the spiritual and physical realms (Dufrene, 1990; Locust, 1988; Perrone et al., 1989; Steiger, 1984; Young, Ingram, & Swartz, 1989; Zellerer, 1992). It is this Great Spirit which spins a life web thus providing the spirit of life to all people, creatures, and things -- in both the physical and spiritual sense. Steiger explained that the Great Spirit's power is seen to vibrate through all, therefore producing the interconnectedness between oneself and the rest of creation.

Zellerer (1992) emphasized that "Native peoples see themselves as part of a whole web of life where all creation is equal. Everything is interconnected and both the physical and spiritual worlds must be honored" (p.254). This view of the interconnected web of life influences the way in which Native people pursue their way of life (Ross, 1992). Ross pointed out that traditional Natives accept and respect their dependent relationship with nature, family, community, and the spirit world.

This interconnected and dependent view of life influences the manner in which health and healing are perceived. A holistic approach is taken which addresses health on three levels: physical, emotional, and spiritual (Young et al., 1988b). As Perrone et al. (1989) pointed out, the spirit world and one's relationship with it is as important and

deserving of respect as the physical world. Health is therefore attributed to living in harmony with the spirits as well as living in harmony with oneself, the community, and nature (Ross, 1992). Freesoul (1986), a Cheyenne-Arapahoe therapist, explained that living in harmony wills the Great Spirit to provide positive life experiences such as order, warmth, and beauty. Freesoul called these experiences the true characteristics of health.

Traditional Natives attribute illness to disharmony with the spirit world, community, nature, or oneself (Perrone et al., 1989). Freesoul (1986) added to this interpretation by explaining that unhealthy people experience chaos, confusion, imbalance, and disharmony. Halfe (1993) offered further clarification of the Cree perspective of illness as she explained that:

When a person is suffering with mental illness, they are treated for the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional problems. They are inseparable. This instability is called spiritual illness, not mental illness. When this imbalance occurs, the ailing spirit must be acknowledged and guided back to health through the proper rituals. Madness occurs from existential frustration, which is the direct result of cultural, spiritual and social deprivation (p. 10).

Healing then is viewed as a cleansing of the spirit in order to get rid of the spiritual pollutants which have impaired one's harmony or balance (Ross, 1992). Ross's interpretation of healing by spirit cleansing was supported by Perrone et al. (1989) who reported that healing requires the cleansing of the spirit in order to re-establish equilibrium among spirit, mind, and body. Steiger (1984) was even more specific as he emphasized that in healing a person has to first learn to "walk in balance" by respecting one's surroundings such as nature, family, community, and self (p. 4). Halfe (1993), writing from a Cree background, also very eloquently pointed out these same key elements in the healing journey as she summarized her hope for the respectful recognition of the Native healing process and perspective. Halfe argued that:

When the Indigenous people are allowed to dance their journey by reclaiming their visions, their personhood, their families, their societies, and all which these encompass, perhaps then ... healing is possible (p. 10).

A Cree Healer's Philosophy And Practice Of Health And Healing

Russell Willier, a Woods Cree healer from northern Alberta, has had his healing practices and belief system documented (Morningstar, 1995; Young et al., 1989). The Cree healer was found to use a holistic healing approach, one which addressed the three dimensions of spiritual, physiological, and psychological (Young et al., 1988b). This Cree healer's philosophy seemed to closely mirror the vital health and healing elements emphasized by the above writers on Native tradition -- those elements being; a strong tie with nature, a deep respect for the Great Spirit, and a close connection with family and community.

Willier's respect for nature was reflected in many ways. He demonstrated his respect for nature by learning about it; he learned about the healing properties of various herbs, roots, and bark (Morningstar, 1995). While collecting his medicines from the land Willier also made offerings of tobacco as a show of thanks and respect (Young et al., 1989). Prayer before collecting herbs and roots was also an observed ritual he practiced so as to give thanks to Mother Earth (Young et al.).

A deep respect for the Great Spirit has guided this Cree healer. Willier explained that the "important thing is to have faith in the power of the Great Spirit" in order to "amplify the power of the herbs and to send spirit helpers to assist the healer" (Young et al., 1988b, pp. 79-80). He emphasized the importance of using "rituals which open channels between the human and spiritual worlds," he also stressed the importance of putting "his patient in the right frame of mind so spiritual power can flow in and assist the medicine to restore balance" (Young et al., 1988b, p.79). In an interview with The Edmonton Journal, Willier was quoted as having said:

You have to have both [herbs and spirituality] before you can get anything done. If I just used herbs I'd have to cross my fingers and hope it would work. And I'm not about to stand in front of anyone and do that (Morningstar, 1995, pp. C1-C2).

Willier's health and healing philosophy also reflected a strong sense of connectedness with his family and community. In his interview with The Edmonton Journal he told of healing his mother's high blood pressure when she was hospitalized for a broken hip (Morningstar, 1995). Willier explained that when he brought her to the hospital the doctor refused to operate because of his mother's high blood pressure. Willier used his healing herbs and prayers to tend to his mother through the night; the next morning her blood pressure was low enough for the operation to proceed.

Another example which reflected Willier's sense of connectedness with his family and community lied in his very reason for becoming a healer. Willier, upon inheriting his great grandfather's medicine bundle, decided his fate had been cast (Young et al., 1989). He then went to the Elders of his community, at the Sucker Creek Reserve, in order to learn more about nature's healing properties (Young et al., 1989).

Willier's Woods Cree philosophy of health and healing seemed to support the Native world view shared by other traditional Native people. Again it was evidenced that health and healing within the Native culture is synonymous with turning to family, community, nature, culture, and spirituality for strength and inner peace.

The Importance Of Understanding The Native World View

There are many important reasons for learning more about the Native world view. These reasons all seem to be tied together by a similar motivating thread -- that of enhancing respect and an open-mindedness towards differing cultural values, beliefs, and practices.

Changes are underway in the health and healing industry; interest is surfacing in

healing philosophies and practices outside of what has normally been considered mainstream medicine (Proctor, 1993). Proctor wrote that the dominant Canadian culture is searching for a new healing paradigm; Proctor also believed that the Native communities of Canada could be turned to for some creative alternatives. In discussing this health trend and the contribution the Native world view could offer, Proctor stated that:

The work of Aboriginal communities in finding ways of integrating traditional understanding and healing with modern medicine may not only assist the people in these communities, but also help to further the development of new ways of understanding human health and the challenges of caring and curing (p. 54).

Thus the Native view of health and healing, as with any other world view, may hold significant answers to the questions being asked by those working within mainstream medicine.

Counsellors have much to gain from an awareness of the Native world view. Dorou (1987) argued that "to be effective, counselling must fit with certain Native values" (p. 33). Dorou went on to explain that while it is not possible to generalize between the Native groups in Canada there does seem to be some similarities in the values held, such as; respect for Elders, lack of interference, cooperation, concreteness, organization by space instead of time, and an animate view of nature and the land. Culturally aware counsellors are also better able to work with culturally relevant metaphors such as the significant symbols associated with the vision quest, sweat lodge, and medicine wheel (Heinrich et al., 1990). Understanding and appreciating Native values, beliefs, healing practices, and ceremonies are required if a counsellor wants any degree of success while working within this culture (Heinrich et al., 1990).

The Native world view also needs to be recognized within educational systems. Wilson's (1991) study of Sioux Indian high school students demonstrated that schools

lacking an understanding of the Native world view seem less able to provide Native students with successful learning experiences. Locust (1988) reiterated the same view by stating that educational systems do not seem to realize that Native, "belief systems are integrated into the total being ... and discrimination against these beliefs occurs in ways that non-Indians do not easily understand" (p. 327).

The significance of Native spirituality within the Canadian penal system has also come to light as demands have been made for "a structure to uphold the fundamental right to spiritual freedom for Native inmates" (Zellerer, 1992, p. 259). Zellerer, a Canadian professor of criminology, criticized the penal system by claiming that "the differences of Native offenders are not being fully respected nor are their spiritual needs being properly addressed" (p. 257-258). In Zellerer's proposal to Corrections Canada he demanded that the "deplorable conditions and cultural genocide which many Native persons still face be stopped ... by recognizing the inherent validity of Native spirituality" (pp. 265-266).

Much information is coming to the forefront regarding the importance of understanding and respecting the Native world view as it impacts on Natives involved in counselling, educational, and correctional settings. The health care industry with its westernized view of health is also pausing to reconsider the inherent value of traditional healing practices and beliefs (Proctor, 1993; Young et al., 1988a). These movements seem to support further research into the unique world view held by Native people in order to encourage a continuation of this shift in thinking.

Wisdomkeepers: The Significance Of Native Elders

My grandmother was a storyteller; she knew her way around words She had learned that in words and in language, and there only, she could have consummate being When she told me those old stories, something strange and good and powerful was going on. I was a child, and that old woman was asking me to come directly into the presence of her mind and spirit; she was taking hold

of my imagination, giving me to share in the great fortune of her wonder and delight. She was asking me to go with her to the confrontation of something that was sacred and eternal. It was a timeless, timeless thing; nothing of her old age or of my childhood came between us you see, for her words were medicine; they were magic and invisible. They came from nothing into sound and meaning.

(Momaday, 1966, pp. 94-96).

Native Elders are of paramount importance since "they are the keepers of history" who pass on the culture through their oral tradition (Zellerer, 1992, p. 254). As Zellerer pointed out, the Elders "are highly regarded and have a significant role in Native cultures, for they have sacred knowledge. They can be turned to for teachings, healing, and guidance" (p.254). Locust (1988) supported this view by stating "responsibility, loyalty, and proper codes of behavior are taught to the children by grandparents, who are the traditional teachers in Indian communities" (p. 328). Even Russell Willier, the Cree healer, acquired his centuries old healing knowledge by first inheriting his great-grandfather's medicine bundle and then by going to the Elders of the community for further instruction (Young et al., 1989). Willier, upon being asked by a reporter where a person could go to learn more about Native healing, simply replied that one should seek out the Native Elders, "if you really want to learn." (Morningstar, 1995, p. C-2).

In further recognition of the significance of Native Elders, the Red River Board of Education developed an exciting curriculum package called "The Grouse's Pouch" (1987). This package pulled together many stories by Native Elders from northern Alberta. The stories reflect many aspects of Cree culture and lifestyle, the stories are also presented in Cree syllabics and English. Clifford R. Ribbonleg, acting as Assistant Supervisor of the project and a Cree Indian himself, introduced the curriculum package by offering some richly steeped personal reflections in regards to this significant undertaking:

My Native folklore ... has been passed on from generation to generation. About

thirty years ago, everything was so different. The favorite time for the children was when the sun set in the evenings and they were asked to go into their homes. This was indeed the time when our Grandfathers would take their pipes out, fill them up and start telling stories. The Grandfathers would continue telling story after story while we youngsters listened with intensity until one by one we would all fall asleep. Maybe that is why some of us are chosen to tell stories Over the years, every elder I have seen I have respected. As a Cree person, I have always looked upon the elders as the teachers of our culture and tradition the Cree people are so closely tied together in their relationships (pp. 6-8).

An Elder's role as a cultural teacher explains the reasoning behind this particular research approach. This research focuses on how one Cree Elder's philosophy of health and healing is reflected in that Elder's storytelling about her traditional way of life. A focus on this Elder's philosophy is therefore important since, according to the literature, the Elders in turn teach their cultural knowledge to the next generations. This passing on of cultural knowledge by Native Elders makes the task at hand, that of recognizing, honoring, and preserving an Elder's teachings, very significant -- for she is a wisdomkeeper.

The Significance Of Storytelling In The Cree Culture

And the ageless act of tale telling is essentially affirmative. Sometimes subtle, always suggestive, the voices of my storytellers affirmed life ... life was indeed worthy of the folkloral telling. Life was worthy of the ritual of story ... Their folklore, as the psychology of their past and the dreams of their future, squeezed into the songline and stories of their present.

(Sewell, 1993, p. 15).

The craft of storytelling has been described in flowing metaphors and unfolding verses. Jerome Rothenberg, in opening the preface to Norman's (1976) book The Wishing Bone Cycle: Narrative Poems From the Swampy Cree Indians, described the art of

storytelling as:

an act of 'going backward/looking forward,' in which past and future intersect; in which traditional ways do not imprison but free the mind to new beginnings and speculations. This is the basis of the 'oral' as a liberating possibility: an interplay that preserves the mind's capacity for transformation ... not as nostalgia but a necessary tool for human survival (pp. ix-x).

Following in support of this storytelling concept of "going backward/looking forward" is a metaphor, used by Norman (1976), in which he borrows from a Swampy Cree phrase used to describe the cautious movement of a porcupine (p. xi). Norman likened the act of storytelling to the safety minded "thinking of a porcupine as he backs into a rock crevice: *Usa puyew usu wapiw* ('He goes backward, looks forward')" (p. 4). This type of behavior is reflective of the importance of storytelling within the Cree culture. Norman paralleled these two actions -- the porcupine's thinking and the Cree art of storytelling -- by describing them as "instructive act[s] of self-preservation." (p. 4). Norman's analogy seems fitting since the Cree stories told about the past give way to new learning's for the future -- thus the concept of "going backward/looking forward" (p. xi).

As previously echoed, Sewell (1993) also finds the storytelling experience one which promotes a transcendence -- a transcendence whereupon "we flesh the young, we sing and sometimes cry and ultimately inhabit an ancestral place" (p. 6). Again it is the telling of happenings -- "each activity, every event and relationship, each ceremony and visit and healing ... which linguistically binds and guides the people" (p. 6).

A Cree storyteller himself, Clifford R. Ribbonleg, Assistant Supervisor of "The Grouse's Pouch" (1987), spoke directly of the significance of the Cree oral tradition when he explained: "[Our] stories are gold and are well guarded in our tradition ... they [are] used to instruct the young and to preserve the history, rituals, values and beliefs of [the] tribe" (pp. 6-7). For Ribbonleg the transcending essence of storytelling again gives way to

the healing words of those who have gone before -- and know. And once again it is the learning-teaching journey of "going backward/looking forward" (Norman, 1976, p. xi).

*I have good friends
Who leave tobacco on the river
As gifts to the spirits below the surface
And for their folkloral journey ahead.*

*And why not our words too ...
Let's gently place them on the surface
That by their watery release
Might become great stories.*

And journeys ahead ...

(Sewell, 1993, p. 16).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Narrative Inquiry: A Research Methodology

This research study aligns itself with the qualitative paradigm approach known as narrative inquiry. This approach has been described as "the study of the ways humans experience the world" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p.2). Narrative inquiry is based upon the assumption that "humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (Clandinin & Connelly, p. 2). It is the very nature of these constructed life-stories which enables a person to be "at once, engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, p. 4).

Data collection in narrative inquiry is aimed at providing a richly textured gathering of narrative data which portrays "the concrete particularities of life that create powerful narrative tellings" (Clandinin & Connelly, p. 5). Data can come in many forms when inquiry is of the narrative nature. This study employed just a few of the methods; conversational interview and observation transcripts, journal records, and field notes.

In writing up the narrative findings one must consider the story elements of scene and plot in order to give context and organization to the "events-as-lived" and "events-as-told" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p. 7). This distinction is necessary, as Cohan and Shires (1988) explained, since "narrational time is therefore not necessarily the same as story time" (p. 84).

Scene must be considered since it enables a writer to set the stage or context for the unfolding narrative story. As Clandinin and Connelly stated, scene "is where the action occurs, where characters are formed and live out their stories and where cultural and social context play constraining and enabling roles" (p. 8).

Plot, on the other hand, is a representation of the unfolding of time -- one which

often unfolds in the sequentially ordered past-present-future sense. Scholes (1966) offered a vivid metaphor which captured the essence of this slippery narrative element when he referred to plot as the "indispensable skeleton which, [when] fleshed out with character and incident, provides the necessary clay into which life may be breathed" (p. 239).

Narrative inquiry is a research process which brings about much reflective thought, mindfulness, and eventually the insatiable urge to 'voice' -- on both the part of the research participant -- and researcher. This realization brings forth an issue which requires attention as a narrative researcher struggles with their efforts, since the telling of the participant's constructed narrative may not be enough. There is often another story waiting to be told, one which evolved as a result of the coming together of the participant and researcher. Clandinin and Connelly (1990), aware of this research issue, provided some sensitive and helpful insight which served as a road map of sorts as this immediate research journey unfolded:

We found that merely listening, recording, and fostering participant story telling was both impossible ... and unsatisfying. We learned that we, too, needed to tell our stories. Scribes we were not; story tellers and story lovers we were. And in our story telling, the stories of our participants merged with our own to create new stories (p.12).

With these considerations in mind it becomes clear that narrative inquiry challenges many of the 'scientific rules' normally associated with research. That is not to say that this form of research is less significant, nor do I accuse it of being untrustworthy. The point I wish to emphasize is that narrative inquiry evolves from a far different framework than that of quantitative research and therefore the issue of trustworthiness must be considered within the context of 'naturalistic' research as opposed to 'scientific' research. Aspects of trustworthiness in qualitative-narrative inquiry -- those being truth value, applicability,

consistency, and neutrality -- can therefore be considered in terms of a study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1985).

In obtaining research which has truth value, narrative inquiry aims for credible research as opposed to absolute truth (Patton, 1990). Good narrative inquiry generates multiple perspectives; it does not claim to capture a singular truth. Capturing internal validity, in this sense, depends upon three elements; the researcher, the data gathering and analyzing techniques, and an understanding of the research paradigm directing the study (Patton). Credible narrative inquiry is highly dependent upon the researcher since they are the instrument guiding and affecting the study. It is therefore vital that the researcher reveal any personal information which could have had an impact on the way the data was collected, analyzed, or interpreted (Patton). A detailed account of the way the data was gathered and analyzed also adds to the credibility of narrative inquiry as it allows for others to appraise the quality of the study. Exposing the strengths, limitations, and assumptions of the qualitative research paradigm also increases credibility by demonstrating the inherent value and limits of the particular methods used (Patton).

Trustworthiness of qualitative-narrative inquiry is also considered in terms of the applicability of the results. Smaller sample sizes have the benefit of allowing for detailed and richly illustrative research. Smaller sample sizes in qualitative research also place limits on the degree of generalizing which can be done, although this does not prevent context-based extrapolations or "modest speculations" from being hypothesized (Patton, 1990, p. 489). One must be careful then in considering the transferability of results since broad generalizations within this research context are not possible.

Another aspect of trustworthiness is the consistency of the findings. Consistency is often considered in terms of the finding's reliability, although in qualitative-narrative inquiry it seems more appropriate to consider findings consistent if they demonstrate dependability. Triangulation of methods, data sources, investigators, and

theories/perspectives are some of the ways to demonstrate the dependability of qualitative findings (Patton, 1990). In situations where only one researcher is conducting the study, dependability can also be enhanced if the research participant is asked to review and react to the research findings (Patton). These approaches increase the dependability of findings thus promoting trustworthy results.

Neutrality is another aspect of research trustworthiness. Neutrality in qualitative-narrative inquiry is best considered in terms of the confirmability of the research findings. Pure objectivity is unattainable because of the inherently subjective nature of qualitative research so attempts must be made to prove the confirmability of results instead. Confirmability of results again depends upon the degree to which a researcher discusses their own data-related perspectives, documents the research procedures, and explains the limitations of the presented perspective (Patton, 1990). By doing so, the subjectivity brought to the study is exposed while the assumption that qualitative research offers perspective rather than absolute truth is emphasized and supported.

And on that note, let us begin ...

Using The Narrative Inquiry Storytelling Approach

The narrative inquiry approach was most fitting for my purposes since this study focused on the narrative tellings of one 89 year old Cree Elder, Dr. Anne Anderson-Irvine -- otherwise known as Dr. Anne. Moments spent with Dr. Anne were like being engulfed in the folds of time; she carried the both of us away to another storied time and place. It was there, in these storied moments of time travel, that Dr. Anne gifted me with the honor of being present as she "engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving [her] stories" -- stories which subtly and profoundly spoke of her philosophy of health and healing

(Clandinin & Connelly, p. 4).

This thesis is comprised of two storytelling voices -- Dr. Anne's and my own. It is the narrative tellings by Dr. Anne which form the basis of the data for this thesis thus reflecting her philosophy of health and healing. Although Dr. Anne's storying voice is the stronger of the two, my own storytelling self found its place in the unfolding of our shared research journey; just as Clandinin and Connelly (1990) noted "we, too, [need] to tell our stories. Scribes we [are] not; story tellers and story lovers we [are]" (p. 12). My stories were presented in order to give voice to my place in this coming together of youth and wisdom and also to further reflect Dr. Anne's health and healing philosophy as it was revealed in our storied lives together. My personal insights and understandings were also given a place in this thesis since they reflected my learning's as I became aware of the connections between the narrative stories and Dr. Anne's philosophy of health and healing.

How Our Stories Were Treated: Presenting And Analyzing The Narratives

Our stories were pulled together and written up so as to present the telling narrative threads of Dr. Anne's life. I wanted to use Dr. Anne's narrative story threads, which were woven throughout the fabric of her life-stories, to portray and reflect her philosophy of health and healing. Following the narrative threads running through her stories was like watching a needle weave a richly stitched fabric, one which had many repeating patterns and shapes -- circles, hoops, and far reaching webs. A focus on these narrative threads reflected much about her as a person -- with certain beliefs, ways of doing things, and ways of understanding the world around her. Weaving the stories together in this manner gave a sense of her life unfolding: it was holistic, natural, and lifelike. It also enabled me to preserve the flavor of the narrative inquiry approach by allowing the stories to literally organize themselves according to the common narrative storytelling element of past-present-future time sequenced plot. This storytelling element

of plot was employed along with the story elements of characters and scene in order to give focus to the analysis of the narrative threads which reflected Dr. Anne's health and healing philosophy.

The write up of our narratives was broken into three passages based upon the focus in each passage. The first passage focused on the organization of her stories according to the past-present-future time plot. The second passage dealt with the element of characters and thus reflected her connections and relationships with the important characters in her life-stories. The final passage considered the scenes from her life-stories and their significance. Throughout each of these passages I included an ongoing "Personal Insights" commentary which gave voice to my understandings about Dr. Anne's philosophy of health and healing.

The passage focusing on the past-present-future plot line presented Dr. Anne's stories in sequential order of their occurrence in her life, since this allowed for a closer look at how Dr. Anne made sense of the past-present-future connections in her life. This natural unfolding of a lifetime of events and memories showed how she saw the past as significant in her present and future; she remained close to her past and mindfully observed how it flowed into her future. This past-present-future connection reflected her sense of knowing where she came from; it reflected her deep connection with family, community, Cree culture, and nature. I also offered a story of my own in this passage so as to explain my own past-present-future connection with Dr. Anne

In the next passage consideration was given to the characters in Dr. Anne's stories since they really seemed to be the characters that gave her life. Threads from her different stories were woven together thus reflecting the important characters in her life-stories and the way in which she constructed her storying around these significant characters. The "Personal Insights" I presented considered the impact these characters seemed to have had on her life as well as what these characters and her relationships with them reflected about

her health and healing philosophy. A personal story of my own was included in this passage in order to reflect how Dr. Anne has been a significant character in my own life in terms of helping me learn more about the Cree culture.

The scenes from her storied life demanded a closer examination in a passage of their own as well. This passage pulled together the significant scenes from her stories. I again gave my "Personal Insights" regarding the meaning of these story scenes as well as what they reflected about her philosophy of health and healing. My voice also found its own place as I told a story about a special scene I shared with Dr. Anne.

The retelling of these stories was an act that beckoned me to fill in the larger story edges with a contextual frame. Dr. Anne's stories were not told in an isolated vacuum; they were spoken of for reasons -- reasons which varied depending upon the context of our presence. For this reason I have preceded each of her stories with the inclusion of a contextual frame in hopes of enhancing the storytelling picture and of adding to the significance of her oral musings.

As an introduction to the three passages on Dr. Anne's narrative threads I included a passage in which I sketched narrative portraits of Dr. Anne, myself, and the two of us together. These sketches were included in order to introduce each of us to readers and to provide a narrative picture of our togetherness. My own narrative sketch also gave me a the chance to present my own perspectives and values which I brought with me into this research process.

The process used to analyze these stories was one which can best be described as intuitive, reflective, and inductive. The process of analyzing the narrative tellings was one which took place from the very beginning, as the words drifted from her ancestral lips. During these storytelling moments my listening mind was already planting her story seeds in consideration of their significance and meaning; it was in these beginning moments and for numerous more after this storytelling time that I would ponder the why, where, and

how of the oral gifts I had been given. It was then and there after that I would ask my intuitive self what I should do with these precious words.

I had initially done a thematic analysis on our first few conversations for a required assignment in a qualitative research class. All the while my intuition told me something more could be done -- something that captured and presented the unfolding of her life-story and in it her philosophy of health and healing. I felt that the thematic approach to analyzing and presenting our conversations lacked a trueness to the narrative inquiry approach. I appreciated the emerging themes which resulted from the thematic analysis but I struggled with the fact that a bigger story was being told -- a life-story. I also felt uncomfortable aligning these wonderfully whole stories with the thematic analysis approach since I knew how narrative speech was usually handled and written up according to this form of analysis -- shredded pieces of speech often being the result. I cringed at the thought of tearing apart Dr. Anne's stories.

A turning point in my intuitive struggle came at a meeting with committee member, Dr. Jean Clandinin, in which I spoke to her about the emerging themes from my thematic analysis. After showing her the themes I had noticed in Dr. Anne's life-stories she asked me one very significant question, one I had already asked myself many times: "Is this a framework that you are forcing on her life in order to organize the data or is this really what her life was and is like -- neat compartments?" It was then that talk of reflecting upon and writing about Dr. Anne's unfolding narrative life-threads took place. It was then that my reflections and intuitive insights were given voice in the process of analyzing the stories. It was then that I decided these reflections and insights would be included in my write up, thus giving justification to my analysis approach as well as presenting my understandings of Dr. Anne's philosophy of health and healing. This reflective process of analyzing the stories felt comfortable and true, and if I may borrow from another narrative writer, "thus the stories, the conversations, were their own end ... it

was my challenge to seek and celebrate narrative understanding, not to delimit or frame it" (Sewell, 1993, p. 22).

The reflective and intuitive process used for analyzing these narrative tellings made for a highly personalized and therefore subjective piece of research. As with any type of qualitative research, this unique narrative endeavor does not claim to be objective in nature. That would be an impossible and ridiculous claim to make based on the fact that my subjective voice is woven into the very fabric of this study. Although subjective in nature, this research is also openly honest in that my subjectivity is put forth for the reader to witness. In doing so I have allowed for the exposure and exploration of my personalized place within this research picture. With the issues of trustworthiness in mind, I also employed a triangulation technique whereby I presented Dr. Anne with all of the "lifted" stories, as well as my interpretations of them, in order to verify my understandings. I have also included all of these stories in the fourth chapter, so as to allow others the chance to form their own interpretations and therefore assess the credibility and dependability of the presented perspective. And so I must now leave it up to the readers of this thesis to decide upon the 'trueness' of this perspective I offer.

This research study attempted to move beyond the commonly taken approach of offering an objectively generalizable explanation of the Native world view. This study was aimed at providing a personalized account of the Cree philosophy of health and healing by attaching to this philosophy a rich and flavorful context, that context being, a human face.

On Capturing The Stories: Gaining Access, Ethical Practice, And Procedures

When this research study was in the initial planning stage I went to my supervisor, Dr. Margaret (Peggy) Wilson, to discuss with her the type of person I should work with as a research participant. We discussed the importance of finding a Cree Elder who was female and had lived a more traditional way of life whereby strong cultural connections

had been maintained. As Dr. Wilson described this type of research participant I immediately thought of Dr. Anne Anderson, a long time family friend.

Dr. Anne, an eighty-nine year old Metis-Cree Elder, had spent the last thirty years of her life pursuing her mother's long ago wish -- that of preserving the Cree language and culture. I reflected upon what I knew about Dr. Anne. I knew she was a woman who was proud of her Cree heritage, for she had written about and taught the Cree language and culture for more than thirty years. I also knew that my parents held an immeasurable amount of respect for Dr. Anne as she had taught them the Cree language close to twenty years ago. For these reasons I felt it would be a true honor to have her participate in this research with me.

Upon deciding this I then went to my parents who helped me get in contact with Dr. Anne. We sat down one Sunday afternoon and called the last phone number we had for Dr. Anne. We soon found out that the number had been disconnected. My dad called some people he knew who also stayed in contact with Dr. Anne. A few people seemed to think that she had moved out to B.C. to live with family. We eventually ended up speaking to a Cree medicine man in B.C. who my father used to commercial fish with. This man told us of the place he last knew Dr. Anne to have lived. Upon calling this apartment complex we again found out that she had only recently moved. Eventually we were put in contact with Elaine, Dr. Anne's niece, who acting as a gatekeeper asked us how we knew Dr. Anne and why we were interested in locating her. My father, a commercial fisherman, explained that he knew Dr. Anne's husband Alex through the commercial fishing industry. He told Elaine of how he used to work with Alex. He also told her of the Cree classes he and my mother had taken, close to twenty years ago, from Alex's fiancée at the time, Dr. Anne Anderson. We were then given a phone number to Dr. Anne's new residence in Edmonton.

After contacting Dr. Anne and making arrangements for a future meeting in order

to further explain my intent I again went to my supervisor, Dr. Wilson, to discuss the issues of ethical practice. We decided that it would be most respectful if I explained the nature and purpose of my research, as well as Dr. Anne's rights as a participant, in an oral fashion while tape recording our discussion. We decided upon this oral approach since it followed with what is known to be correct in Cree protocol.

I used this oral approach in obtaining Dr. Anne's informed consent for the research as well as for explaining her right to opt out at any time. She was also made aware of her rights to confidentiality and anonymity, although she requested that her name be openly used throughout my thesis. When I explained this information to Dr. Anne I also supplied her with a written copy of my research purpose and all of her rights so she could have a copy in case clarification was needed in the future.

Following Cree protocol also meant observing the traditional way of symbolizing the recognition of an agreement or contract with a Native Elder. When I went to Dr. Anne I gave her tobacco and a piece of white cloth to symbolize both my respect for her and my request to learn from her. Her acceptance of this tobacco meant that she would agree to talk with me; it was the traditional way of sealing our oral agreement.

As I met with Dr. Anne I often brought her a gift of some sort in order to show my appreciation. These gifts were gestures that ranged from flowers to fish to potted tomato plants. Another gesture I offered, and one which gave generously to both of us, was what can best be called my 'traveling time machine' -- for it was the use of my car for running errands which engulfed us in the many folds of time which unraveled with her rich story lines.

Dr. Anne was also kind enough to allow for our 'third ear' to join us as we ventured along on our storytelling journey. I asked her during our very first visit if I might use a tape recorder for the research process. She agreed that it would allow for a much more detailed and correct account of our discussions. I tape-recorded often when we

were together but there were also occasions in which I felt that taping would be intrusive or disrespectful. During these times I discreetly tucked it away relying instead on my own storytelling memory.

My visits with Dr. Anne were carried out in what is best described as an unstructured conversational approach. I rarely went to her with any specific questions in mind. Whatever came up we discussed. I found that this type of approach fostered an openness in our sharing which often resulted in unexpected surprises and tellings. It was this approach that gifted us with a conversational flexibility that is comfortable, and common, between well acquainted friends.

Each visit with Dr. Anne was later transcribed onto my computer and dubbed onto another audio tape for future reference. I would return a typed copy of each transcript to Dr. Anne for checking the following time we met. I reminded her that she had the final say as to whether something was included in my thesis or not. Once the transcripts were complete I would go back through each one and "lift" her stories from the conversations we had shared. Each story was given a title by me which mirrored the general subject of the story; these story titles came from key words "lifted" directly from each of her stories. Throughout the research process we discussed the emerging threads which I noted in her stories. Her feedback during this time verified my interpretations. Once all of the stories had been collected, analyzed, and interpreted I presented Dr. Anne with a final copy of my work in order to reaffirm my interpretations.

As I "lifted" Dr. Anne's stories from the typed transcripts I attempted to capture her storytelling voice as best I could. I wanted the stories to be heard in her voice -- with every pause, laugh, and silence that was her's. I wanted to allow her stories to speak to readers with the emotion, passion, and emphasis that was present for me as I first heard these stories. For this reason I accompanied her storytelling voice with notations that only added to the fullness of what actually occurred as I listened to her. One notation that will

be frequently found in her stories is that of a 'quiet pause' in the middle of a statement; I have delineated this occurrence by using a double dash (--) to mark her pauses in speech. Her laughter and silences have simply been noted as such.

My first meeting with Dr. Anne, for the purpose of this research, was in February of 1995. We continued our visits until October of 1995. We saw each other about once or twice a month during this time. The arrangement of our visits together was very unstructured. Getting together with her was usually confirmed only a few hours before seeing her since she was watchful of poor weather -- as it effected her health. If there was rain in the sky, or clouds promising of some, we would postpone our visits since she tended to her painful arthritis during these wet windy days. When the poor weather stretched out for a couple of weeks at a time I would often call just to say hello even though I knew she would not be feeling up to meeting.

Our visits together took us to many different places. It was at these places, and on our way to them, that we traveled down a river of time as her storied life unfolded. We were carried upon the current of these storytelling moments while driving in my car, walking in her park, sipping tea at her kitchen table, and catching the breeze off of a sparkling lake. Each visit took us in another unique direction with my 'time traveling machine' pointing the way and our storied mouths busy with the words of life.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE NARRATIVE STORYTELLING

AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR STORIES

This fourth chapter is a presentation of two storytelling and storyliving voices. Sketching Lives is the first portion of this chapter which offers narrative portraits of Dr. Anne, myself, and the two of us together. The passage entitled, The Watery Current Of Time: Past-Present-Future Connections, is a presentation of Dr. Anne's life-stories, one of my stories, and my personal insights section. The Characters That Gave Her Life is the next passage which provides a presentation and discussion of Dr. Anne's most significant story characters as well as my personal insights and a story of my own. Scenes Of Togetherness is the final passage which offers a presentation and discussion of the scenes from Dr. Anne's life-stories; my own story and a personal insights section are also included.

Before beginning this storytelling journey I want to pause to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Anne Anderson-Irvine for her willingness to share with me these most precious of life-stories. These oral gifts she has entrusted to me fills me with an overwhelming sense of honor and emotion. I want it to be known that these stories do not belong to me; these stories belong to Dr. Anne and her own oral tradition. I have simply been present for the 'telling' of these cherished pieces of time -- not the living.

SKETCHING LIVES

Sketching Lives: A Portrait Of Dr. Anne Anderson

Anne was the third child born into a family which would eventually house ten children. She was born in 1906 and was the first female child in her family. Her father was of Scottish ancestry and her mother was a full blooded Cree Indian. While growing up Anne's family lived on a farm which fronted onto the Sturgeon River, this farm was four miles east of St. Albert, Alberta.

Anne's upbringing brought her into close contact with the Catholic church as she was forced to live at the Gray Nuns Convent from the time she was ten until she was thirteen years old. Upon returning home from the Convent she attended a country school near her home until she completed grade ten. At this time Anne's help was required on the family farm and so her schooling came to an end. Despite Anne's contact with the Catholic faith she remained close to her Cree cultural roots thanks to her mother's self-determination and pride in her own Cree heritage.

During these early years Anne's father farmed and also employed himself as a farming instructor for Native people. In the later part of Anne's childhood her entire family moved to Hobbema where they lived for three years while her father taught farming to the Native people in the area. After having completed his work at Hobbema the family returned to their farm near St. Albert. When Anne was sixteen years old her father suddenly died leaving Anne to help her mother with the expenses of a large family. Anne's responsibilities included helping the Catholic sisters at the Youville nursing home in St. Albert. She also worked for many Scottish farm women who needed help on their farms.

When Anne was in her late teens she met and married her first husband, a Cree member of the Calahoo Band. They had two children, a son and a daughter. Her husband had a farm on the Calahoo Reserve just five miles north of Spruce Grove and here they

stayed for the first four years of their marriage. Her husband enjoyed traveling and so one fall after the farming season was over they packed up and traveled to the United States where they ended up living in Oregon for nine years.

Upon returning to Alberta, Anne accepted a post at Fishing Lake, the first Metis Colony in Alberta, working for the Provincial Bureau of Public Welfare. She held this position for six years before moving to Edmonton so her children could continue their education. It was during this time that Anne met and married her second husband, Joe Anderson, a Cree man from Fishing Lake.

Anne's next move took her back to St. Albert where she trained for the nursing profession, a career in which she would devote twelve years of her life. It was also during this time that Anne cared for her aging mother. Anne was in her early sixties when her dearly loved mother passed on; her death left Anne with an aching emptiness in her heart.

"Speak Cree," my Dear Mother would say. "It is our beautiful language. I love it and I'm proud of it! Proud of being Indian! I want you to love it and be proud of it too. How can you stay close to my heart if you do not speak my language? The language must be written or it will die. I know you can do it because you have both the heritage and the schooling."

Anne's mother had shared this message with Anne many times -- and so after her death the words seemed to echo in Anne's mind. Her heart ached so badly for her mother she eventually went to see a doctor. It was during this visit that Anne had a vision of her mother. In this vision her mother once again whispered her last request, "My language will die if someone does not write it." Anne's heart was touched. She returned home full of purpose and drive. She retired from nursing and went to work writing and teaching the Cree language.

* * *

Anne has currently written well over one hundred copyrighted books on Cree

language and culture (see Appendix). She wrote the first Cree-English Dictionary which has 38,000 Cree words included within. Her other books have covered topics such as: Native legends, herbal medicines, Cree language curriculum guides, Metis culture, and children's Native books. She has also written a most interesting book, called The First Metis, on the history of the first Metis people in and around the St. Albert area.

Another major aspect of Anne's work has been teaching the Cree language and culture. She was able to do this by becoming founder and president of Edmonton's "Cree Productions Learning Centre" in 1974, a downtown office and classroom where she taught her Cree classes. Ten years later, in 1984, she also opened the "Native Heritage and Culture Centre" in Edmonton.

Her love for teaching the Cree language has taken her into classrooms all over Alberta. She has taught at the University of Alberta, Grant McEwan College, the Fort Saskatchewan Jail, Charles Camsell Hospital, Fairview College, Y.W.C.A., and Boyle Street Co-op. She has also worked along side educational consultants with numerous school boards throughout Alberta in order to help them develop Cree language curriculum and teaching materials.

Anne's dedication to preserving the Cree language and culture has not gone unnoticed. Her achievements have been recognized in numerous ways. In 1978 she received an Honorary Doctor Of Laws from the University of Alberta. She has also accepted the Native Council of Canada Award. She was recognized as Women Of The Year by the Y.W.C.A. in Edmonton and in 1991 she was presented with her proudest award yet -- the Order Of Canada by the Governor General of Canada. There are also a number of other awards filling the walls of her office which is currently located at The Metis Nation in Edmonton.

In 1985 an Edmonton park, located at 10515 -162 Street, was also named in her honor. A few years later a bronzed buffalo monument was placed in the "Dr. Anne

Anderson Park" in order to symbolize the survival of the Cree culture and to commemorate Anne's significant role in preserving the Cree language and culture.

* * *

At eighty-nine years of age Dr. Anne Anderson has just recently begun -- what might best be called -- an active retirement. Her love for the Cree language and culture keep her active. During this last year she has continued to take part in cultural engagements around the city. This past year has also been a writing year for Anne -- for she once again put pen to paper as she authored her autobiography.

Anne's retirement has also been full of people. Her warm and caring nature has ensured her many friends and these friends come to visit with her frequently. As a greatly respected Elder, Anne has many young people who come to her -- myself included. She spends time with these people telling them stories and talking of the culture. She speaks in Cree with some of these visitors as they wish to practice their language with one of the greatest teachers around.

Anne and her third husband Alex Irvine, a Metis-Cree man from the Winnipeg area, were married in 1979. They currently live in an apartment tower here in Edmonton. Anne also enjoys her time at home these days. Her retirement has allowed her time to pursue some of her favorite past times like sewing and making preserves. Anne's connection with her family is extremely important and so she spends much time visiting with her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and niece. Anne has a younger brother and sister with whom she also stays close.

* * *

This sketch of Anne would not be complete without framing the portrait with a comment on her as a person. When I reflect upon Anne I feel the need to comment on her beautiful way with people. She has a gentleness about her that embraces people with a sense of warmth and understanding. Anne has a natural ease about her that softens people

and draws them towards her kind heart. It is this presence which fills those around her with a deep respect and joy for having come together with such an inspiring person.

Sketching Lives: A Portrait Of Myself

Much personal reflection was required as I decided what to share in the writing of my own narrative sketch. My goal was to share from my own life-story that which would best provide a meaningful and relevant portrait of my place in this research journey. In doing so I felt the need to share from my own family and cultural background in order to reflect the way in which my past has influenced my present search for understanding and a sense of cultural connectedness. I recognize that my past influences began long before my entry into this world and so in attempting to sketch a portrait of my place in this research journey I will begin by first revealing some of my own family history ...

*** * ***

In the year 1798 my first "Canadian" ancestor, eight generations before myself, arrived in Canada from the Orkney Islands off Scotland to work as a Hudson's Bay Company Employee. This man, Andrew Setter, married a Cree woman and they settled on a river lot eleven miles north of Fort Garry along the Red River in Manitoba. These people are my direct descendants from my mother's side of the family.

My maternal family tree, since the time of Andrew Setter's arrival, has been one distinctly intertwined with Cree heritage. My recently researched family tree has found that everyone of Andrew Setter's ten children and in turn almost all of their descendants, generation after generation until my maternal grandfather, intermarried with other people of Cree ancestry. The only exception from this, aside from my grandfather's marriage and my mother's marriage to my father who is of Scottish-Irish descent, was discovered in the marriage of my maternal great-great-grandfather, who married a Native woman whom we

now know was the daughter of an Assiniboine Indian chief who lived near the Fort Union Trading Post on the North Dakota-Montana border

*** * ***

Awareness of my family's Cree heritage has had a direct impact on my interest in this research topic; my own life experiences have also influenced and shaped my present search for cultural understanding and connectedness ...

*** * ***

My parents have worked as licensed commercial fishermen in Alberta, British Columbia, and the North West Territories throughout my life. When I was a very young child we spent the summers working and living north of Cambridge Bay, N.W.T. where my father managed the Arctic Outpost Sportsfishing Camps. During the winters we lived at Pigeon Lake, Alberta so my parents could commercial fish the frozen lakes around the province.

When I was five years old my parents, younger brother, and myself began going out to the west coast of British Columbia to live and work aboard a small salmon fishing boat. It was here on our fishing boat that we traveled the wide stretch of B.C. coastline for five months out of the year before returning to Edmonton to lake fish during the winters and early springs. This migratory lifestyle became our way of life -- and although I no longer follow the stars in search of the spawning west coast salmon my parents and brother still do.

*** * ***

My families traditional way of life was another factor which enhanced my interest in the Native culture. I believe that my exposure to this more traditional lifestyle also increased my sensitivity towards Native issues. Our way of life as commercial fishermen afforded us the opportunity to live and work in many Native communities. These experiences, in turn, provided me with a deep respect for the uniqueness of other world

views, especially those philosophies held by Native people.

These life experiences, along with my own Cree heritage, have been the influencing agents of this research study. For it has been these factors which have tugged at the back of my curious mind for many years, beckoning me to continue my own search for a greater understanding of Native culture and my own place within it.

These life experiences have also influenced my perspectives on Native health and healing. My personal beliefs, in turn, have inevitably made their way into this research as I analyzed and interpreted Dr. Anne's health and healing stories. The perceptions I brought into this research process must then be considered in order to understand how they may have impacted upon my research.

My perspectives on Native health and healing, prior to doing this research, had been heavily influenced by my time spent living and working in predominantly Native communities as well as reading in the area. I believed that traditional Native health and healing involved having a close relationship with many interconnected and interdependent healing sources. I understood those healing sources to be: nature, family, community, and cultural traditions. I viewed cultural traditions in terms of having an understanding of one's Native language and healing ceremonies as well as believing in a Great Spirit and the spiritual embodiment of ancestors, animals, and nature. I also believed Native healing was dependent upon having a deep respect for the knowledge and wisdom of one's Elders; I felt it was the Elders who taught a person the value of being interconnected with these sources of healing.

I also realized, through experience more than anything, that Native health and healing holds different meanings for different people. Some of the books I had read prior to my research seemed deceiving in their broad-sweeping generalizations about Native people. My own perceptions, the result of having lived and worked with many Native people, made me doubt some of these far-reaching generalizations. After all, I had

known many Native people who, unfortunately, knew very little about traditional Native healing practices and beliefs. I had also known Native people who humbly carried a wealth of traditional healing knowledge.

And so as I consider the assumptions I brought with me into this research, I realize that while I held a more traditional understanding of Native health and healing I was also aware of the inherent differences existent in each individual's philosophy. In other words, I was well aware of the risk involved in generalizing one philosophy to all Native people.

Sketching Lives: A Portrait Of A Coming Together

With my arm entwined in her arm we slowly walked together.

With my thoughts entwined in her words we drifted with ease together.

With my deep felt respect entwined in her wisdom we cherished our time together.

Time together with Anne was always characterized by an atmosphere of warmth and comfort. There was an ease about our visits together which induced us into the storylines of her life. As we slipped into her storied past I often thought about our unspoken, yet well known, positions -- her as teacher and myself as student. Our positions in this research journey seemed clear to both of us -- and with this awareness we would each take our place, Anne with her storytelling voice and me with my listening ear.

THE WATERY CURRENT OF TIME:
PAST-PRESENT-FUTURE CONNECTIONS

Story Context

My first visit with Dr. Anne took place in February of 1995 on a cold winter afternoon. I met her at her apartment and we quickly re-aquainted ourselves by talking about our family's and the years which had passed since we last saw one another. We sat in her living room before moving to the kitchen table which sat in front of a large sunny window. As we pulled our chairs up to the table Dr. Anne opened up a folder which was full of photographs, materials for teaching the Cree language, and various pieces of her journal writing and speeches. This folder I was soon to find out did not just hold together her papers and pictures but more importantly it held together, in a loose and fluid fashion, her memories -- and accompanying those memories were stories, her stories -- her life-stories.

Dr. Anne in embracing each of these memory rich scraps of paper drifted back in time to relive and retell of the stories which gave shape to and whispered of her past, present, and future. Many stories swirled around us on that cold winter afternoon as we sat close together at her small kitchen table. Here is just one of them. And it begins our storytelling collection since it is a story of beginnings. Dr. Anne's beginnings, for it is the story of her birth.

"You'll Be Proud Of Her Many Times"
Anne's Story About A Medicine Man's Prophecy

I was so small when I was born my mom thought I was going to die. I was not even three pounds. But she had two boys before me and they were small too, so she had

small children. Mother said she couldn't put me in a bed, like a cot, because I was so small. But grandma -- grandma made me a bed out of a rabbit, out of a shoe box, and she wrapped it with rabbit furs. In there she put little blankets that I needed and she kept me on top of the stove, (laughing) can you imagine? She would put me up there to keep me warm. You know long ago the stoves had a warming oven up there on a shelf. It's a wonder I didn't cook up there (laughing).

But there was an old Indian man, he was an old Indian medicine man that lived in St. Albert. They called him "Old Noel". Nobody wanted to talk to him because they thought he had what they call "bad medicine" You know how they say among Native people, "He uses bad medicine." or "He is bad." There is such a thing as bad medicine. If you married someone -- and you had a boyfriend before -- and if you married someone without thinking of him well he could make you drink, like give you something to drink, and those roots are real bad (lowers voice). They make you lose your mind. My mom always, always said, "Don't ever be mean to that poor old medicine man because he can be really cruel to you. Be good to him all the time." But he spoke only Cree.

But anyway, when I was born, my mother was the only Indian lady in St. Albert at that time, all the rest were Scottish farmers that had brought their Scottish wives from Scotland. When the old Indian man heard -- just because my mother was Indian and could speak to him in the same language -- he respected my dad a lot, my dad could speak a little bit of Cree but not very good, just enough to make him understand. This old medicine man wanted to see me because my mother was Cree and he was Cree. He had heard that my mom thought I wasn't going to live and he came to see me. And my dad didn't know what to do because mother had just had me maybe a day or so -- and he wanted to see me. So -- my aunt and grandma were there, looking after my mom, and dad came in and told mom and so mom said, "Well, I guess we had better listen to what he wants to do."

And so he looked at me and the first thing he said was, "I want to see her hands." And I was wrapped up in a rabbit skin so I could keep warm and he pulled my hands out and he said, "Oh my, she is very small but," he said to my dad, "this women is going to be a great women and you will be so proud of her when she grows up." My dad (lowers voice) didn't really know what he was talking about but the man said, "She'll never be sick and she'll be big and strong and she'll do wonderful things in life and you'll be proud of her many times." And then he said, "Well, I guess I'll go now but don't think this baby is going to die. It's not going to die, it's going to grow and she'll be so big and strong." And look how tall I am, I was about this size when I was fourteen'

So he knew what he was talking about (laughing). And oh my goodness -- and my mom was so scared this old medicine man might do something because she didn't know too much about him either ... and you see that's the way I grew up in St. Albert. And my mom used to say, "Oh, that poor old man." And one day they found Old Noel dead. Of course he was old and nobody knew how old he was.

(Interview #1, p. 11-15)

Story Context

It was blisteringly hot out when I next heard about Old Noel's prophetic visit. This telling took place as I drove Dr. Anne home. We had spent the afternoon at her office at The Metis Nation on St. Albert Trail. While we were there she had taken me into a back room which was full of many Native artifacts which she had either made or had acquired from her ancestors. We also picked up some books she had written which she wanted to take home to have on hand. We then shared a lunch of Chinese food together at a nearby restaurant before making the story-filled journey home.

It was the middle of June 1995 as we ventured homeward that day with the interior of my car seemingly aflame with the intense heat. Her stories hung in the thick air as heavy as the heat itself. Even though the seasons had changed hands, Dr. Anne's thoughts were still of the past -- and its ever flowing stream into her present.

"And She'll Never Be Sick"

Anne's Story Of How The Medicine Man's Prophecy Came True

When ... I was born I was so tiny mother made a bed out of a shoe box for me and that was my bed. There was no use putting me in a crib or anything because they'd never find me if they did, you know (laughs). And grandma, grandma used to say "Oh, you were so small," she'd say. But -- what he [Old Noel] wanted to see was my hands. And mother said she took this shoe box, well my aunt took the shoe box because mother was still in bed because I was just born, and he took the shoe box and said, "I'd like to see her hands."

And mother said, "You had the smallest little hands and long little arms." And she said that the doctor, the old medicine man, pulled out my hands and said, "Oh my," he said, "she's so tiny but it's very true," he said, "she won't die, she'll live for many years, she'll live till a long more than anybody that I even can talk about." Cause he said, "She'll grow to be a strong women and she'll never be sick." And that's true, I never was sick in my life you know. And then all of a sudden now I was sick.

I never was sick, you know, and when I was a young girl going out working, I used to go out and work for white people on a farm. That's all I knew was to work on a farm. I used to go there working and the people used to say, "As small as you are, you're so healthy and you're so -- that nothing will ever happen to you. You'll always be strong." That's what this old man would tell my dad and my mom, you know, -- that's the man (laughing) -- medicine man.

I never was sick and you see I was in where there was typhoid fever and in them days of course those kinds of contagious diseases were all over the place. And I worked where there was typhoid fever and I worked where there was scarlet fever, all kinds of diseases and -- I never was sick. And most of the time they'd say, "Well you have to have an inoculation." But I never was sick, I just -- lived and did my work at home (silence).

"Yah," he said, "she's small but oh she'll always be strong, you know, she always will be so strong." He was so happy to see me, you know. When I was growing up I wasn't very big when he died, I was about ten when he died. Mother told me, "You know the old medicine man that said you were going to live for a long, long time? Well he died, they found him in bed -- dead," you know.

He spoke only of the wilds -- he'd say the trees were his friends and the rocks. If he found a rock, a big rock, he'd always go and touch it and he'd say, "This is my friend." And he'd tell this to other people eh, he'd say, "This is my friend." And the same with the trees, you know, he'd say "This is my --". And because mom said he was, we believed it, you know, that he was a medicine man.

The old store keeper kept four families in little log houses along the river, the Sturgeon River, it was just kind of like a little home for people, old people, but he was the only single one there. The rest were all old married couples. And mother used to say, "Now you're going to go give them some butter, give them some milk, give them some potatoes or pork," you know. She was always sending them something, you know. So wonderful -- mother was such a kind person.

(Interview #6, p. 67-70)

Story Context

As we drove down the highway I handed Dr. Anne a collection of her stories that I had already "lifted" from my transcripts. It was a beautiful day out. Fall was just beginning to show its colors and so in celebration of the turning leaves and blue-gold sky we decided to drive out to Sandy Lake for the afternoon. I offered the stories to Dr. Anne so as to confirm her decision to allow me to use her personal stories in my thesis. She nodded and laughed quietly as she flipped through the first few stories about Old Noel's visit. Her light laughter then gave way to the silent hum of the highway. When these quiet thought-filled moments were complete Dr. Anne cleared her throat and reflected again on how her past had become her future.

"Whatever He Had Said Came True"

Anne's Story Of How Her Life Was Foretold By The Medicine Man

Mother used to say that this old medicine man would say, "Why do you worry? She won't die. Look at her hands." He wanted to look at the inside of my hands. He'd say, "Look at her hands, she's a women who's going to do a lot. You'll be proud of her and there's no need to be worried about her passing away." And whatever he had said came true, you know (silence).

And all of a sudden several years later, about eight years later, mother came and told me that they found him -- he had past away in bed, you know. There was several little log buildings that they gave to the poor and the store keeper looked after them.

(Interview #8, p. 76)

Story Context

Dr. Anne shared of her childhood memories on our very first visit together. This

particular story was told to me that first day as we sat nestled around her kitchen table, me leaning towards her with wide eyed gratitude and her staring off -- far off into the distant past as if the bright window above her kitchen table held the visions she could see.

"Being The Errand Girl"

Anne's Story About Helping Her Mother Help Others In The Community

Old Noel lived in St. Albert. And they had four old cottages along the river. And this old Frenchman that came from France took these old, old people who could hardly support themselves and he put them in these four old cottages. And he put this Old Noel in one. And then in the evening he'd give them whatever they had at the store that they couldn't sell, like fresh meat or else baloney -- baloney was a number one food -- and then bread; he'd give them a loaf of bread and baloney and whatever.

And my mom used to tell my dad, "You'd better go give Old Noel a piece of pork." See, we had cattle, we had pigs, and we had horses and so every so often dad would butcher a cow or a pig and she would say to my dad, "You go give him a piece of pork or something." Or mother would cook it and then take it to him, he could eat that you know, and she would send him a bannock. Bannock at one time was the only kind of bread they had.

So (sighing) it was a great life I'll tell you. And when I was big enough now to run errands for my mother -- this is what she'd say -- "Now you go and visit the first grandma in the first little old log house," and she'd say, "and give her a pound of butter and give her a bannock or else give her a roast of beef." So here I was carrying the food there for the grandma -- being the errand girl -- Oh Lord! (laughing).

It was like the first old folks home in St. Albert. Isn't that something! And they'd just stay there and one by one they'd die. They were old. Nobody knew their ages, none of those old people knew their ages, nobody could remember when they were born. They were all Indian. That was all they could handle in those days. Father Lacombe had nothing but Indians. St. Albert at one time was 100% Indian people. So it was really wonderful that they could do that for the Indian people. And then of course some of them hunted, if they weren't too old, they hunted rabbit and partridges and they got fish from people. Oh my lord, when I think of it I just think there's so much history all over the place.

(Interview #1, p. 14-15)

Story Context

In early May of 1995 Dr. Anne invited me to go with her to a church sale at the Sacred Heart Church in downtown Edmonton. I picked her up at her apartment and the two of us drove together to the sale. As we made our way there we began discussing the importance of culture. Dr. Anne had previously given me some writing she had done in which she emphasized the importance of staying close to one's culture in order to maintain a healthy body, mind, and spirit. I was very much interested in her philosophy and so I asked her about it.

Dr. Anne engaged in this discussion about the culture-health connection by once again reflecting upon her own past and the life long learning which she acquired through her connectedness with her family, community, and Cree culture.

"The Way Of The Elders"

Anne's Story Of Learning Culture Through Her Family

It [culture] keeps you very much alive because it's -- part of you, and you can keep going and keep it in mind, you know. This is something you can't just drop and forget about it, you've got to have this with you all the time. My mother used to say, "It's part of you, you can't -- forget about it at all." She'd say, "It's part of me and I want my children to keep that also." And I used to think well gee, poor old mom, although she wasn't an educated women she knew, you know.

The grandparents they had the whole history, you know, grandpa would say, (pointing to her head) "Up here -- you don't need a pencil to write it down," you know, that's what he'd say. Nobody was writing in them days, you know. He'd say, "Its got to be up here and it's memory -- memory, memory." So -- I used to say, "My goodness, poor old grandpa -- and mother."

The only thing that I heard my grandfather say was, "Listen to your mother, she is a good women and she wants you to grow up to be something that she'll be proud of." They didn't say too much to the girls but for the boys they certainly -- (silence). And then they made it interesting how they made little bows and snares, setting their traps, and they'd show them how. That was something the boys liked. They could sit there for hours

and listen to their grandparents.

And we learned ... from our mother -- the same that grandma said we were told by our mothers. That's why grandma would always say, "Listen -- listen to your mother, listen to your grandmother, they have everything, they don't forget these things."

My aunt, my mom's sister, I stayed with her for a long time. Aunty wanted us to teach her English, you know, and so -- that's the way it was. Mother and Aunty spoke a bit of French too because they were in a convent. She would teach me all sorts of things and she would teach me medicines and she also wanted us to follow the way of the elders -- and that religion was so important ...

You see the Creator is who made us eh, like whoever, whatever was made was done by the Creator. And of course the Creator -- they say is God because he's the one who brought us into the world and helped us with getting organized and whatever. The Great Spirit, that's the way they talked about it -- the spirit of all people and the spirit of -- they never said Jesus or anything like that for the longest time. It was only later on that they started talking about it. It was only when Father Lacombe started to bring in education and the understanding and that there was, you know -- that we had to have something like education to further our beliefs and understandings -- to make us understand, you know.

(Interview # 5, p. 52-56)

Story Context

Dr. Anne shared this vividly recalled image with me as we drove home after spending the afternoon looking around The Metis Nation and going for lunch. The drive home was full of many of Dr. Anne's stories about her family life as she grew up in and around St. Albert. Her mother and grandmother, being two of the most important characters in Dr. Anne's life-stories, were once again portrayed as teachers of Cree cultural ways -- reflecting Dr. Anne's sense of how the past influences the present and eventually the future.

"Mother Was A Great One For Medicines"

Anne's Story Of How Her Mother Learned Medicines From Her Grandmother

You see my mother -- was known by all Native people especially if they dealt with medicines because mother was a great one for medicines ... Mom used to go digging the medicines with grandma. That's where she learned from, from our grandmother. And they had bags, you know, like a half a hundred pound flour sack. You could smell the aroma from those bags, it was just so wonderful, you know. They kept them for anybody that called, you know.

(Interview # 6, p. 67)

Story Context

It was during the middle of February 1995 when Dr. Anne first took me to The Metis Nation to show me her office full of the many awards and gifts of recognition she had been given over her thirty year teaching-writing career. As we sat in her office, Dr. Anne leaned over the side of her desk chair and reached into a large box on the floor. She pulled out a large plastic spice bottle which had been refilled with dried roots which she had collected years earlier. Shaking it she began to tell me about the healing roots and her family's past connection with them -- which in turn influenced her present knowledge of Cree culture.

"Through My Mom And Grandma"

Anne's Story Of How She Learned Cree Culture Through Her Mother And Grandmother

And these are all the different wild roots and things we use eh (shaking a spice bottle full of dried roots). That is what my mother and grandmother used to plant and they'd take those little roots and boil them and then we'd have to drink that medicine, you know, if we had a sore throat or something ... What I know about the Cree language and culture is through my mom and grandma, you know, cause they used to tell me these things.

(Interview # 2, p. 26)

Story Context

As Dr. Anne and I made our drive out to Sandy Lake in late August of 1995 we admired many of the wild flowers growing along the side of the road. It was a clear sunny day with a gentle autumn breeze in the air which brought the yellow, blue, and purple flowers to life as they swayed with the wind. We were driving through the Calahoo area on a winding country road when I commented on an especially large patch of purple wild flowers. I wondered out loud what kind of flower they were and Dr. Anne responded with an answer which once again spoke of another time and place -- another time and place where she was first given answer to the same sort of question by her own elders.

"People Would Come For Her All The Time"

Anne's Story Of Learning Healing Ways Through Her Mother And Grandmother

Those are wild asters. Those are real medicines. They'd be used for heart. The root, you know, you dig it and dry it. Then you drink it in a tea. Mother and my grandma taught me. My grandma would say, "This is what this medicine is for."

People would come for her all the time, you know. They'd be sick and she would grab this great big bag and away she'd go. And she'd look after the sick there. She'd boil medicines and she'd pray -- and she'd pray. And all the elders did that.

We used yarrow, lady's slipper, lily, and mint. It was hard to get them around where we were, we couldn't find them hardly, we had to go way out somewhere. Generally mother would come with us and grandma was always glad to show us what to pick, you know ... If we ever had pains on the legs or the back we'd always boil medicines. There was five different roots we'd put into a pot and boil them. And it really helped, you know, you could feel them helping.

(Interview # 8, p. 84-85)

Story Context

We were nearing the end of our first visit together when Dr. Anne shared this

painful story with me. As she spoke her distant eyes focused on a far away place and the room became full of long heavy silences. These hurtful memories surfaced like a slow and gentle current, flowing from her long ago past into the bay of her deeply connected present.

"I Will Teach You In The Culture"

Anne's Story Of How Her Family And Cultural Ties Kept Her Strong Despite Discrimination

We never were sick. We always drank our teas. Grandma always had her pail and she would put her roots and things in there and boil it. She would always come feel us and say, "I think you're going to have a cold, you have to drink some medicine," and we would and we never were sick, you know.

We never went to the doctor. There were no doctors. There was only one in St. Albert. He was an old French doctor and he wasn't a very good doctor. There was discrimination then against the Indian people. "The Indian people didn't know nothing, they were dirty and they were lazy," that was all we heard, that was all I heard all my life. Oh ...

And when we started going to school we started speaking Cree to our little brothers and sisters and the priests said, "Don't you talk like that anymore, that's the devil's language." Now -- imagine telling us this -- that Cree language was the devil's language?

I went home and I sat on a chair and mother said, "What's the matter with you?" And I didn't want to talk, you know -- I didn't want to say because we respected the priests. We thought they were like a living God or something (silence). Oh, that man -- you know and he just said, "Well that's the devil's language, don't you speak like that or you'll get slapped across the face." Oh, I tell you (silence).

So I told my mom that was what the priest said. "Well never mind," she said, "I don't care what the priest says. God gave me a language and I'm going to speak it. I'm Indian and you kids remember everyone of you is part of your mother, you are part Indian." And she would lecture us as if she was like a professor and she couldn't read nor write, never did. She died that way and she always felt so bad because she couldn't read nor write.

So she said to us kids, "Tonight we're going to have a meeting. When dad comes from the barn, after supper, we're going to all sit and we'll have a meeting." So that was ok then. When dad came home she and dad went to the bedroom and I guess she was telling him about this. So after supper we had a meeting -- and she knew how to. She said, "I think it was very unfair for the priest to say that because I was given that language, my grandfather and grandmother were given that language. That's how come I speak it. I learned from my mother and dad." She explained everything so nice and after that she said, "We don't have to go speak Cree at school -- you guys go there and you learn English -- just English -- the rest we'll learn at home, I will teach you in the culture."

And that's what we did. And you see that's how come I know so much, my mom taught me. She taught me the culture and beadwork and everything -- oh, there's so much to know. She was like a teacher. That's what I always say, my gracious. And then I'd have to go stay with my aunt that lived at Enoch Reserve. She married an Indian man by the name of Ben Beaverfoot. And mother would say, "You go over there now," every so often she'd say, "it's your turn to go stay with aunty and you'll learn more of the culture." And that's what we were continuously doing.

(Interview #1, p. 17-20)

Story Context

In early March of 1995 I drove Dr. Anne to her office at The Metis Nation. Our drive there was lengthened by the thick slush which was accumulating on the melting streets. As we made our way slowly through the sticky snow our conversation turned to the topic of the residential school system. In doing so, Dr. Anne once again gave credit to her mother's guidance for shaping her into the person she is today. And once again her past flowed into her present ...

"Whatever I Know Is From Her"

Anne's Story Of Her Greatest Teacher -- Her Mother

My schooling was nothing, you know, nobody taught us. They didn't even have teachers there. They said they couldn't find any. Well -- maybe it was true, that was a

long time ago, eh. I was about 12 years old then.

The priests said we couldn't talk Cree -- couldn't speak Cree because it was the devil's language, you know, so nobody dared to speak Cree.

My mom said, "Never mind, let them say what they want but your mother -- that's her language. God gave her her language to go by and we'll still speak Cree and then you guys will go to the white man's school." That's what she said and that's the time when we started going to school.

We were raised Catholic but you see, we sort of -- well I don't know -- I didn't follow Catholic after, you know, much. Mind you I still pray that there is a God and we say like he created us and tried to give us what was good for us and made us understand. But it was awfully hard to know which way to go -- it was very hard to know. But I still sort of feel like I'm a Catholic but I don't go very much, you know.

There is a spiritual Creator that is above us that is supposed to kind of guide us along. And mom used to always say, "It is a very narrow path so you've always got to try to stay straight on this path so you don't get into any trouble." My mom although she had no education, you know, she was just like a professor, she could talk about anything. Whatever I know is from her. It's from her teachings.

(Interview # 4, p. 45-47)

Story Context

It was on our drive to Sandy Lake that I was honored with this next story. Our day was unfolding in a slow and easy manner and so in keeping with the spirit of the afternoon I drove for the journey not the destination. As we wound around the soft curves of the back country road Dr. Anne talked of her mother's sister, her aunty, with whom Anne was very close. Memories of times spent living with her aunty, and in turn learning from her, were revisited and portrayed once again in this humorous life-story.

"We're Trying To Teach Them Properly"

Anne's Story Of Learning Life Lessons From The Elders Who Already Knew

I lived with her [Anne's aunt] sometimes for months. And every week or every second week we'd go for rations, you know, like fresh meat, bread, lard, jam -- and then we'd all go to the lake. I wrote a story about this.

And when we were just kids, I was about ten, and there were some boys that came and one of them played violin. And wherever the boys went he'd carry that violin. And he'd play and we'd dance and oh they'd wave at us to come and so of course -- the girls went. And a friend of mine she came, we both went, and her mother was very strict. She'd say, "You girls, if you don't behave yourselves the first thing you know you're going to have babies." And I didn't know what she was talking about (laughing).

And I used to tell this lady, she was my mother's cousin, and I used to say to her, "When I grow up I'm not going to have any kids. That's all I do is look after brothers and sisters. I never have time to play. I never have a doll." I never had a doll in my life and I wanted a doll so bad, you know. So here I was and she'd say to me, "I wonder if you're telling me the truth." And I told her that I'd only have one or two children. So many years later we came to Edmonton, and I had two children then, and I was holding them by the hands and we were going down first street to shop. And I met her. And she looked at me, "Is that you?" she said. "Yes," I said. "So you do have two children!" And I'd told her all I was going to have was two children (laughing).

All her -- I knew all her daughters and her sons -- they're all gone now, they all died. So sad. They had a farm there. She had one son and one daughter at home.

Oh, (laughing) and wherever the boys went of course we all followed. The boy said, "Oh I'm tired of playing that violin, I'm going to go down to the river -- or the lake." There was a lake just a little ways from there and he wanted to go catch some frogs. So of course we had to go there too. Then all of a sudden my girlfriend -- she saw her mother coming and her mother had a little switch (laughing).

Oh my heavens, I thought boy we're really going to get switched on the legs. You know, we always dressed with our best clothes, you know -- in nice little dresses. But she was always after us, "If you girls don't behave yourselves the first thing you know you're going to have babies." She came and gave me a tap on my shoulder with her finger and switched her daughter. Her daughter was a little older than me. "You never even came home, you never even came home to eat. My, my look how dirty you girls are!" And we

had to look at our dresses to see how dirty we were. But we were having so very much fun.

So anyway we came home and you know how on the wagon there is a long wagon pole? "You sit there both of you," she said. And aunty, aunty was still with my uncle having something to eat with the other guests. Then aunty came to look at us, "My, my," she said (laughing), "look at your dress, your nice dress, look how dirty you are! Go and wash your hands right now." So of course we had to go wash our hands. And then she made us sit and it was so awkward to sit because we were on a slant.

And then all of a sudden we saw the boys going back to this dancing -- you know it was an outdoor dance place, eh. And they would wave at us, you know. And aunty would see them and she would look at us (laughing) and we'd be scared.

My old uncle told me after, "I felt sorry for you girls. It wouldn't have mattered if you went dancing and having fun (laughing)." But my aunty would say, "You shouldn't say that! We're trying to teach them properly -- not to get themselves into trouble or to hurt themselves in some way or another." But (laughing) he was ready to let us go.

So all of a sudden now, there was about ten or twelve wagons there, and they had hobbled the horses eh. And my uncle said, "Well I think we'll go home now. I've got things to do. We can go home now." And oh I was so glad, you know! So we jumped up and I got lifted into the wagon and I was ready to go. And I was so glad to go home (laughing). Yes, those were the good old days, that's for sure.

(Interview # 8, p. 78-80)

Story Context

As we continued our way towards Sandy Lake Dr. Anne's thoughts stayed with her aunt and uncle with whom she had spent so much time. Through the car windows we watched the remnants of a simpler time rush by -- dark shiny horses, overworked tractors, and old weather damaged barns. And it was these graying hulks of aging lumber which seemed to invite the most attention from Dr. Anne. She watched them thoughtfully, as if recognizing old friends, and with a slow and heavy sigh she would whisper, "There's

another old barn." It was during this time that Dr. Anne recalled this next story of helping her uncle care for his farm.

"I Was So Proud"

Anne's Story Of Learning From -- And In Turn -- Helping Her Aunt And Uncle

My mother wanted me to hear Cree, my aunt spoke mostly Cree. And I was the oldest girl. And my mom used to say, "Spend your time there and you'll learn Cree properly." So we had to listen to her. Auntie spoke a little more Cree than my mother did.

One time when I was at my aunty's -- my uncle he didn't speak English and he wouldn't, you see -- he said, "God gave me my language and it's all I'm going to talk. I won't speak no white man's language." So anyway aunty was supposed to go on to Spruce Grove with uncle one day but she had a terrible headache in the morning. So I guess aunty and uncle talked and she said I'm sure I could go with him and talk for him. So I got ready and we went to Spruce Grove.

When we got there I knew the hardware man. The hardware store was where we were going. And we went in the big wagon with the horses. That was the way we traveled, you know. So -- he knew me right tway when he saw me, he said, "I remember you. You used to come here with your dad." And I said, "I have to speak for my uncle because he can't speak very good English."

So anyway he told me in Cree, "I want six bundles of shingles, tar paper, shingle nails, and oil to do the tractor." So I kept repeating what he wanted and after a while we got everything. The hardware man said, "My, you are a good business women!" And I was so proud (laughing).

So then uncle said, "Now we've got to stop on our way home and rest the horses." He was always so careful to rest his horses. We stopped by this lake on the way home and he had brought some oats along for the horses. And he said, "We'll feed the horses and give them a drink." And before we left the hardware store he asked me, "What do you want to eat?" And I said, "Strawberries, canned strawberries." I never could get enough of them (laughing).

So anyway we went to the lake and he said, "I guess we'd better open your can." So that's what we did. We stayed there and had such a great time. And when we got

home there's my poor aunt standing at the door -- she was worried about her husband. And my uncle told her, "Everything went just fine, we got everything, and she was a really good business woman." And I was so proud to think that I was a really good business woman (laughing).

(Interview # 8, p. 80-82)

Story Context

The soft autumn breeze pushed us along the narrow country road and with a similar tenderness this next story unfolded. Slowly and with much feeling Dr. Anne touched her past in remembrance of those who came before her.

"He's Thinking Of You Now"

Anne's Story Of Helping Family Cope With Sickness And Death

She had a very bad headache so my uncle went and got a little old grandma that had wild medicines, you know. He went and got her and she boiled herbs in a pail and then she said, "Drink this." And so aunty started drinking this and she said that she started feeling better right away -- her headache was leaving, you know. And she was so glad that she was feeling better now. Every morning my uncle got up and gave her a cup of tea, right when she got out of bed.

And he [uncle] was quite sick all the time. He'd say, "I'm going soon." And my aunt would say, "Where do you think you're going?" And he'd say, "You know, I'll be gone to a place where there's no more sickness and no more pain." And that was when he died that he talked about this. And she said, "Boy, I wish you wouldn't talk that way." "But," he said, "it's true. I've had my life. You're a strong women and you'll still -- ."

He had made a kind of chest for himself out of heavy lumber and that's where he kept all his money and stuff. He had six thousand dollars in there. Aunty couldn't -- read so she said, "You'll have to open that box and see what's in there." So I had to open that box and I had to count that money and there were cheques in there and all sorts of things.

Poor aunty -- she started to cry. And I said, "He's thinking of you now. He's

thinking that you'll live well. While you're on earth you'll be living well and not worrying about how am I going to get a few dollars, you know." (silence)

My mother made me go back and stay with them when he became sick so I could help out my aunt. I helped her make bread -- there was always so much to do to help my aunt with my uncle (silence). When I think of those days, my goodness -- I wondered, "How will they live? How will they survive?" See their daughter had died, Justine, when she was just twelve or thirteen. So I guess they just weren't strong enough (silence).

(Interview # 8, p. 82-83)

Story Context

When we reached Sandy Lake we walked towards the beach and sat down at a picnic table. There were many gulls along the water's edge which captured our attention. These birds fluttered about calling loudly to their audience. The leaves rustled in the autumn breeze, the water lapped at the shore, the gulls cried out with excitement -- and Dr. Anne floated back down the watery current connecting her long ago past with her present.

"Poor Old Bird"

Anne's Story Of Her Family's Sorrow For Their Geese

Another time an eagle got our gander. It was lunch time and mother and dad weren't home, they were away somewhere and I was of course the baby sitter. And I was cooking and preparing the lunch. The boys had come in for lunch and we were all sitting at the table eating. We'd always say a prayer before lunch and we had just finished our little prayer and then we were starting to eat. And my brother was serving to the smaller kids. And all of a sudden -- I was looking out the window and I could see along the river bank there was this kind of a brown -- sort of animal. And then I saw something flapping like -- and here it had caught our gander (quietly).

And our poor gander, you should have seen what it did to it. It was just like someone had taken a knife and just -- ripped it. And the poor mother -- she ran away with her three little goslings. She went up the river, and you know how the ground gets when the water kind of goes underneath it and makes a big space there, well she crawled

under there. And every so often you'd hear the poor old gander making these horrible calls for its partner.

So my brother said, "Well I'm going to go and get the rifle and shoot it." And of course there was this great big brown eagle so we went over there and oh this great big eagle was ready to fight the boys. And the poor gander was just dying there, you know. So just at that time our neighbor man came, he always kind of watched out for us. He said, "That's an eagle. You might as well kill him because it will kill some other ducks or geese or something. And you might as well kill him [the gander] because he's going to die."

It was just all blood and you'd of thought someone had just cut it with a knife -- the breast all open like that. So this man said, "How about if I just kill it?" And so he did. He killed them both. The boys didn't want to kill it. They felt sorry for it. And my younger brother was crying.

So anyhow we brought it home and put it in the little shed that was like a garage (silence). So we wondered about that mother goose -- where it had gone to. And one day my younger brother when he was out playing near the water he said, "You know mom I'm sure I heard that mother goose calling and she sounded like she was crying." And mother said, "Well she could be somewhere hiding yet you know. She was scared to death".

So he took his boat and away he went. And mother told him, "You know that place where the earth had washed away from the bank and there's that big hole?" And here she was coming out with her three little goslings. And he took her and put her in a bag and he took the little ones and put them in the boat and brought them home -- and she was hollering. She was still hollering for her husband. Poor old bird, so my dad said, "Well, we'll get her another partner." Sure enough one of the neighbors was raising ganders so we got one from him. But those poor little goslings -- they were so scared, they were just terrified.

For a while they didn't get along very good but later on in the spring they were fine. They mated. And mother used to get the boys to make little houses near the lake and they put lots of hay in them. And she [the goose] knew very well what they were trying to do, that they were trying to help her so she could raise her family there. And she did, she raised twelve geese the first year.

(Interview # 8, p. 86-88)

Story Context

We drove home from Sandy Lake that autumn day by passing through the Alexander Reserve. Dr. Anne admired the farms and the swaying golden crops. It was then that she told me about her family's three year move from their St. Albert farm to Hobbema -- a difficult move which took them away from the strengthening ties of family and community.

"Well I'm Going Home" **Anne's Story Of The Importance Of "Home"**

For three years dad worked at Hobbema teaching [Natives] how [to farm]. We were down there for three years, of course our family was big then -- and my mom didn't really like it. She wanted us kids to go to school. There they only had about two hours of school. She'd say, "They should have more days for school, the kids would learn more." It was really true, it really helped after.

So one day she said -- dad had signed up for another three years so when those three years were over -- she said, "Well I'm going home, back to our own house." So we did. And dad stayed for another while. Mother went home and said, "Oh, I'm glad to get back to the old log house."

(Interview # 8, p. 89)

Story Context

When we drove out to Sandy Lake we took a longer route which brought us past the turn off for Lac St. Anne. The Lac St. Anne pilgrimage had taken place just a month before and the constant rain had prevented the two of us from going to it as we had planned. While we were passing the Lac St. Anne sign on the road I asked Dr. Anne if she had gone to the pilgrimage very often while she was growing up. She smiled warmly and told me ...

"It Was Good For Me"

Anne's Story Of Breaking Away From Her Work To Connect With Her Culture

Mother always took me [to the Lac St. Anne pilgrimage] because I was the older girl and she'd say, "You're always working so we'll take you to the pilgrimage." So it was good for me because I was always working. When I think back I don't know how I ever managed. It was so hard to do yet we did it. When those Scottish ladies would come and get me they'd say, "Oh Anne, don't ask just go ahead and you can do it, we can see that you can do it, you were raised on a farm and you know what you're doing." And I enjoyed it because I did the same things at home, you know.

(Interview # 8, p. 83-84)

Story Context

This next short story was also spoken of as we drove to Sandy Lake. Dr. Anne had been telling me about the hard work that had filled her life and in talking about her nursing career she once again reflected her sense of connectedness with family and community -- a sense which still guides her in present life.

"Taking Care Of The Elders"

Anne's Story Of Being Called Upon To Help Take Care Of The Elders

Twelve years I was a nurse in St. Albert. Many times I wanted to quit but mother would say, "If the sisters want you, you go." And then the first thing you'd see was the sister coming down to our place, "Oh, we need your girl to come and help." Mother would say, "You go." I'd be taking care of the elders and feeding them. It was very nice. The sisters were very nice. Most of the elders were Cree speaking people so I'd talk to them.

(Interview # 8, p. 84)

Story Context

While sitting at Sandy Lake Dr. Anne was reminded of the farm house she grew up

in which fronted onto the Sturgeon River. She described how the river flowed past her front yard. As she pointed to a group of trees growing a short distance down the beach she explained that her grandmother's house was just about as far away when she was growing up. Remembering her grandmother opened up another story line which again reflected Dr. Anne's sense of connectedness with her family and community.

"Because They Had Nobody There"

Anne's Story Of The Importance Of Family And Community Ties

At Christmas time we all went to grandma's, that's dad's mom, she lived just a little ways from us. She had a house, grandpa had built her a house and -- we'd all go there. She had a great big house. She had five bedrooms in that house. So they had quite a family. And then -- she raised -- one of her cousins families kind of split up and she didn't like that and poor grandma used to say, "I'm going to go and get those five kids." And she did.

She brought them to her house and that's where she raised them. The father and mother parted, they weren't getting along -- so that's what happened. So she had all these bedrooms so girls took bedrooms and boys took bedrooms. It was wonderful the way she did -- grandmas were like that. And so those kids kind of grew up with us. So they were just like our family.

And I can remember when my cousin got married -- one of those boys and I -- I was the bridesmaid and he was the best man. And I used to tell my mom (laughing), "Well, I think I'm going to get married too, you know!" because I had a part in it. His name was Alex too (laughing)! Mother and aunty got me -- I can always remember it -- I had long hair and they rolled up my hair and put it in this great big ball on top of my head and I had this gray silk dress. And it was ohh -- you know, I just thought that I was really getting married, oh lordy, lordy (laughing).

That best man died here not too long ago, he was ninety years old. Yah, he used to come and visit us all the time because they had nobody there and then grandma died -- and that left everything kind of all upset, you know.

(Interview # 8. p. 88)

Story Context

It was upon returning from our afternoon at The Metis Nation in the middle of June 1995 that Dr. Anne shared with me this most personal of life-stories. We were driving along an avenue near where the federal government used to have the fish marketing corporation, a place where my father and Dr. Anne's husband, Alex, used to work and sell their commercially caught fish. As we passed by this area we began to talk about commercial fishing. I then asked Dr. Anne how she came to know Alex. Her story began as an answer to my question and then continued on, as she waded further into the waters of her past, re-counting her father's death and the way in which her family found support in each other, the community, and nature.

"But It Was A Good Way"

Anne's Story Of Turning To Family, Friends, And Nature In Healing From The Grief Of Death

When we moved into a house, we moved on 118 street into a block, and this man told me, this old man was Ukrainian or something, and this old man would tell me, "There's a man downstairs in the suite downstairs, in just a one bedroom suite," and he said, "you know, a man like you." But he meant a man like -- with the same blood, I guess I could say, because Alex has Scotch and Indian in him too, you know. And I said, "Oh, it can't be, it can't be." And sure enough it was Alex, you know. (Alex is now Anne's third husband)

And my brother knew Alex very well so every so often he'd bring fish for Adolf and so one day Adolf says, "You know you like fish why don't you get some, it's nice fresh fish, you know." And then sometimes they'd bring smoked fish and I like that too! So that's how I come to meet Alex. Just kind of through this fish business (laughs). He was in the basement and I didn't believe this old man, you know, he was old and he spoke very poor English, I could hardly understand what he was trying to say.

My brother had known him for a long time before. I think maybe from fishing, you know, cause they used to fish at Lac La Biche at one time. And my brothers lived out there after dad died, they all sort of moved away from St. Albert, you know. They didn't want to be where everything reminded them of dad and all sorts of things. I used to think

we'll never live, you know, we'll all have -- something will happen to us, we can't live without a father. But we did.

And the Mayor came to see my mom and he said, "You know your husband had taken on a life insurance and there's a few thousand dollars at my office if you wanted to bring your daughter." And I was always the spokesman to help mom, you know, so sure enough the Mayor came and said, "Well now, this is four thousand, four or five hundred dollars that you can use and then I can find a buyer for your farm."

We had a little farm in St. Albert. But we had cattle and my dad raised horses and we had a stallion and mares. The boys didn't like that, didn't like the mares and especially the stallion -- they were scared of it, cause they'd get pretty rambunctious, you know, especially when the mares were coming home, you know, to the barn. So my brothers said, "We're not going to stay here, we're going to go away." I had an uncle in Lac La Biche and so he said, "Send the boys down here and I'll look after them and I'll get them jobs, there's a lot of jobs here." They were [fish] filleters...

Oh, they weren't at all interested in running a farm. They said, "Everything reminds us of dad, we don't want to be here." And oh, then they used to cry, both of them would be over at the barn and they'd be crying down there, and oh it was awful. They were young men, you know, say fifteen and seventeen like that. But still -- poor dad, you know, he was a good father (silence)...

So there was this big log house and it was fenced with logs all around, I don't know how big the lawn was but it seemed very large. And that's where we all moved in there and the kids went to school. All the kids went to school and they didn't have to walk miles, three or four miles, to go to Bellerose School, we just went to St. Albert School. So that's the way it was (silence).

So anyway -- after we sold everything we moved all the furniture to St. Albert -- but it was a good way, mother she had wonderful gardens and she went picking berries. And a lot of her friends were living in St. Albert -- a lot of her old friends (silence).

(Interview #6, p. 63-66)

Story Context

As we drove home from the Sacred Heart Church sale in early May of 1995 our

conversation turned to the element of spirituality in the Native culture. We had spent the afternoon in the basement of the church with some members of Dr. Anne's family who had come to the sale. I became curious as to whether Dr. Anne ever attended this church and upon asking her she told me that she did come once in a while but not very often. It was at this point that she began telling this very captivating story which carried us once again upon the flow of her intertwined past and present -- a past and present which was, and is, closely tied to culture, family, community, and nature.

"Dear Creator ..."

Anne's Story Of Healing Through A Connectedness With Cree Culture, Community, And Nature

Long ago they never went to church, they never did anything, you know, but they prayed together, you know -- it was just togetherness -- and they prayed and the Spirit was always there. It was always something that could -- that would survive because it wasn't a forgotten thing -- it was always with them, with the Native people, you know. Survival was always -- now before survival was they belonged to the animal, they belonged to the earth, like they always said they belonged to Mother Earth eh, because earth was the mother, she provided everything for us, the hunting, different animals, fishing, you know, many things that you could use to survive on. And now it's -- it's different again, the whole thing has changed because even fishing now is not a very good -- long ago the Indians could go, now the Indians can't even go and fish. Now they have to have a permit, they have to have this, they have to have that, you know, which is terrible. They were put on earth for survival -- and hunting in their own way, they were hunters eh.

They had their own spiritual way of praying -- and they had their own spiritual way of healing or doctoring one another -- drinking. I can remember one time, a long time ago, we went when I was gathering roots and things over at McLennan, that's a town north of here. And there was this little old Grandmother that made medicine.

While I was visiting her she said "Oh, there's one of our," -- if it's a man they say, "it's one of our brothers coming and I know that he's sick because just look at the way he's walking eh." And he was so stooped over, you know. So -- she told her husband "Go and meet him because," she said, "he looks like he is very sick." And he was carrying a little pail, this means that she would make medicine for him and he would take it home so

that he could drink it.

So -- anyway he came in, she brought him in, and she said to him, "Now what seems to be wrong?" And then she said to him, "What? -- This? -- This? -- This?" where she felt pain. And then she said, "I'll go make medicine for you." But her and her husband prayed, you know, and what I understood, part of it, what I understood, was she said, you know -- "Dear Creator, you know, my brother has arrived and he is very sick. We need your help also I am depending on Mother Earth's medicines to help him."

She put all these different medicines in a big kettle and she put it on the stove, she was, you know, praying at the same time with her husband and what I understood them to say was, "Please help us, we depend on you so much, we depend on Mother Earth because she provided the remedies." And it was so nice to hear them praying, you know, and they whispered, they whispered back and forth as they prayed because they suffered, they suffered so much you know, from the different diseases that they'd get. He had a bad back, you know, and he was so stooped over his chin was almost to his knees.

And then later on now the husband too came in and kind of tried to massage his back and straighten him out as much he could, you know, and as much as she could, he'd work one end. And sure enough, you know, it wasn't long and he started to stand up a little straighter. And she gave him some of that hot tea, you know, some of that hot remedy. And it wasn't long and he was able to stand up, he able to stand up and straighten his back out. It was just amazing how quick he got well after. I can remember she took five different things in this thing, in this pail.

And then she said to him, "Now, before you go we are going to have some hot tea and bannock." And she had some ground up dried meat, pemmican. And she said, "We're going to have all this and we're going to all sit." And he said, "I can't go and sit at the table because the white lady is there." I was the white lady, that's what he said. And she said to him, "No, she's not a white lady. She is a Native lady like us, her mother is a full blooded Native women." And he looked at me so funny and I started talking to him and I said, "You come here and you sit down right here and don't be ashamed," I said, "don't feel bad about anything because we are all one, we belong to Mother Earth, we depend on her remedies and we depend on a lot of things to keep ourselves alive." And he kept saying, "Yes, yes, yes." But I was talking in Cree to him, you know.

But poor old man, oh he was so happy, he had just about straightened out his back, you know, and he said, "Now I'm going to go home." And she told him, "Now you've had your tea and bannock and you've had some pemmican." And that pemmican

you know it's all pounded so you can eat a little at a time. And she said, "You won't have to have your supper now until later on, you're going to rest now." And so he did. He said, "I'm going home." And she gave him his little pail he was carrying and she filled it up with this medicine. And she said, "Now if you're not feeling any better tomorrow you come back and we will add other remedies in here but I think what we put in here is going to help your back."

And that old man, he was just so happy, you know, and he was just so straight. He went walking along the road, he didn't care, you know, he just said, "I prayed to the Creator to help me and that was all I needed to do because I knew I was getting help from the Creator too." It was so wonderful the way he was. And we used to see him all of the time. We used to see him going walking by there but this time he was really sick, he was stooped over and he was so -- (sigh) yes (silence).

You know because our grandparents, my grandparents especially, used to always, always, always tell us, "We are just -- so thankful that the Creator is helping us right along, you know, and if we remain good -- and we remain -- good, not only to yourself but to everyone around who may be sick also --." And they'd talk about that.

(Interview #5, p. 57-61)

Story Context

This story was shared with me on my first visit to Dr. Anne's apartment in February of 1995. She had been talking of her many different family members when she asked me if I had seen the book she had written called The First Metis. I told her I had not and so she quickly got up and pulled this very book out from her book case. She opened it up and began showing me old black and white photographs of her ancestors which she had included in the book. One of the photographs was of Dr. Anne, as a young mother, with her first husband and two small children. This story soon followed as she reflected upon a marriage which took her away from what was close to her heart, that being -- her home.

"I'll Be So Glad If I Go Home"

Anne's Story About The Importance Of Family And Home

My first marriage, my kids' dad -- this is my third marriage with Alex -- my first marriage was with a Calahoo man. We had a farm on the Calahoo Reserve then. We had lovely land and all sorts of things. And Bill Calahoo, my husband, was such a great man but oh -- wandering -- you know a typical wandering. You know how Indian people are? They never settle down, eh.

And I started having babies of course when I was married, I wanted to have children, and he said, "Well, let's have two children," -- and I didn't even know what he was talking about. He said, "We can't have too many because it costs a lot." He was educated -- far beyond I was. He was put in a school -- and you know -- well I just went along with him because he knew what he was talking about. So we had two children, a boy and a girl, and after that he said, "I think we've had enough." He said, "We can raise these two and educate them."

But he always was traveling, he never could settle down. He would put in his crop of wheat, he grew only wheat and nothing else, and he got involved with American men who wanted wheat because in the States they weren't having enough wheat. And that's the way it was, we made money on wheat, he never planted oats or barley or anything like that. And then after when we'd thrashed the grain we would sometimes have two car loads of wheat and of course he would say, "Anne, get the kids ready, we're going to travel." And I used to think, (whispering) "Oh my goodness, what will I do with my little ones? Where am I going to bath them and all this?"

First of all we always went to Browning, Montana because he knew some people there from traveling before. Then we went to Oregon and Washington, we were all over through the States. I used to think, "Oh, I'll be so glad if I go home," (laughing) you know? But Bill was good you know, good to the kids, good to me -- but his idea of an Indian was they never sat still, they'd roam. That's part of their life, this roaming eh (long heavy sigh).

(Interview #1, p. 10-11)

Story Context

Our drive home from Sandy Lake took us through the Alexander Reserve which is

largely agricultural. It was here that Dr. Anne recalled this next story which took place when she worked for the Provincial Bureau of Public Welfare at Fishing Lake, the first Metis Colony in Alberta. Her voice became stern with pride as she shared of this memory which again paid tribute to the Elders who came before her.

"Mother Said That's The Truth"

Anne's Story Of Defending The Cree Culture By Remembering Her Elders' Teachings

When I used to go lecturing I used to have to go talk about the reserve and how they were faring out there. And one lady, she got up and she said, "Why is it the Indians are so lazy they can't even get up and plant grain?" And I said to her, "I beg your pardon!" And she said, "Why is it the Indians can't even get up and plant grain?"

I said, "It's because --the way you're talking -- it's because you don't even know anything about the Indian people. The Indian people were put on earth as hunters. Long ago, during the hunting times, who planted grain in them days? No one. No one, not even the white man wasn't planting because there was no grain to plant. They were put on earth as hunters because there was a lot, a lot of wild animals." So I said, "Don't say that -- because you're wrong. It's because you're not understanding -- if you were understanding -- you would NOT be saying this." I said, "Mother Earth is a place for the Indians where they can live and they can hunt and make their way in life -- but not, but not the way you're saying it, that they're 'lazy'."

You see the first grain that was ever found was grain from the goose's crop. It was spring time and the geese were flying north. I can remember my husband saying, "Oh, there's geese flying!" He got his rifle and shot and got one. And it wasn't a goose it was a swan and a swan is not as good eating -- they're too tough. Anyway when they dressed the swan they took all the grain out of it's crop. See because a lot of these swans would graze on land on open fields and they become full of the grains.

And that's how they started farming -- that's how they started to have grain to plant. And they'd plant very carefully, just a little, two or three cup fulls here and then they'd start some more in another place. And then they'd thrash the grain. And that's what they did. Mother said that's the truth, that's what they used to do.

(Interview # 8, p. 89-90)

Story Context

It was on our slushy drive home from The Metis Nation in early March of 1995 that Dr. Anne touched my heart with this next life-story. Her willingness to share of such personal experiences deepened my sense of respect and gratitude for this most inspiring Elder. And like the many stories before this telling, and the many stories after it, I was again pulled into the fold of her rich memory as she honored her past and those who came before her.

"Poor Old Mom She Needed Help" **Anne's Story About Helping Her Aging Mother**

I think of all sorts of very sad things sometimes. You know, you don't want to do that but it enters your mind and then it makes you feel very sad sometimes -- I feel like I want to cry -- (voice cracking) and mother used to tell me this and you see I kept mother eight years of her last days (silence).

She had diabetes and an enlarged heart and every so often they would have to take her to the hospital and take blood from her and then she'd be ok for a long time and then all of a sudden she'd have to go back again to the hospital. And then we went north to Yellowknife with my second husband, he got a job up there. He said, "Oh, come up here I get lonely too." So I went up there. Gee, and I wanted to stay once I got down there. But I couldn't. I stayed with him for a while, then all of a sudden my mother wrote to me and said, "You know, I think you should come and try to stay with me because I'm needing help."

But I never saw mother to need help before because she was always so active. But when I got home it was about 8:00 in the morning when I got off the plane. When I walked into the house the door wasn't even locked or anything and when I looked into her kitchen I didn't see anybody and I looked in the other side of the building and here was my poor mom sitting there. And oh she looked so (silence) -- she didn't look sick or anything -- she just looked pitiful, she's sitting there and I just thought, (whispers) "Oh my god, it's no wonder she needed help." So I said, "Hi mom, I'm home!" And she looked and said, "Oh my girl, I'm so glad you're here, now I'll be able to sleep." That's what she said, "Oh, now I'll be able to sleep," -- I suppose she never slept she was worried so much of herself.

And I said, "First of all mom you get up and have a wash. Did you have a wash?" She said, "I don't remember." And I said, "You go wash mom and I want some breakfast," you know, just to keep it, you know -- I really didn't need any breakfast because you get fed on the plane. She said, "Oh, that will be wonderful." So I looked in her fridge and found some bacon and eggs and I said, "Let's have some bacon and eggs." And she said, "Oh yes, I'd like that." So she got washed and put her house coat on.

She didn't hardly eat anything. She didn't eat much. I noticed she was just (silence) -- she didn't know how to take it because I'm home now. Anyway I covered her up in bed and told her, "You stay in bed as long as you want and whenever you want some lunch I can bring you some." And after a while I noticed that when she got up she was more active, you know, and she wanted to be with me now. But she could hardly walk. Poor mom I thought -- I'm so glad I came home. Poor old mom she needed help.

(Interview #4, p. 49-51)

Story Context

In early July of 1995 I went with Dr. Anne and her husband Alex to visit the Edmonton park which was named in her honor. This park is located at 10515-162 Street. It is a large plot of city land with settled trees and some benches to rest at. Within the "Dr. Anne Anderson Park" there is a large bronzed monument of a buffalo to honor Dr. Anne and all of the work she has done in order to help preserve the Cree culture and language. It is here among the trees and the buffalo statue that two separate plaques sit, both of them set into massive rocks.

I walked around the park with Dr. Anne that day, arm in arm, as she talked of her dedication in preserving the Cree culture. As the magpies called and the sun warmed our skin we stopped to read one of these plaques. It was while we stood there that Dr. Anne's deep sense of connectedness to her family, community, and culture gave way to the telling of this next story.

"Speak Cree!"

Anne's Story Of Staying Close To Her Mother By Staying Close To The Cree Culture

This is what my mom used to say; "Speak Cree," my dear mother would say (repeats in Cree). And we all spoke, the eleven of us, except the two youngest ones, they didn't speak very fluent. But the rest all did, we kept it, you know. There was eleven children, one died, when it was small. I had four brothers and six sisters.

Yah, these are the words -- of my mother -- "It is our beautiful language, I love it and I'm proud of being Indian. I want you to love it and be proud of it too. How can you stay close to my heart if you do not speak my language?"

Yah, poor mom, she was so proud she was Indian, you know, she wasn't one who wanted to be French or something else. She always wanted to be just as she was, you know. She was very proud of her culture.

She always said that I should [teach Cree], "You can," she'd say, "you can do it!" She said, "Because you went to the white man's school and you know the syllabic writing, you can do it!" she would just say it, she would demand it, that I write it. And I did and I was glad I did.

(Interview # 7, p. 74)

Story Context

During my first visit with Dr. Anne in the winter of 1995 she showed me a speech she had written for the unveiling of the buffalo monument at the "Dr. Anne Anderson Park". Again her high regard for Cree culture, nature, and the Native community came together as she explained why the buffalo was chosen to signify the tremendous amount of work she has done in preserving the Cree culture and language.

"The Buffalo Is Survival All Right"

Anne's Story About The Spirit Of The Buffalo

Here is the "The Spirit of the Buffalo" (Shows me a speech in notebook). This is

from when we were making the monument -- this is what I had to write. Everybody joined -- whoever knew something about the Spirit of the Buffalo because the buffalo is the most powerful animal eh, he's so big and strong. And he's survival -- because everybody hunted buffalo long ago, not just a few people, everybody -- even the white man that first came, they hunted buffalo. They used the hide first of all to make a teepee, to be warm, you know, to make a place to stay. And everything was so rich, you know that I used to say, "Oh my goodness, the buffalo is survival all right," because there was so much meat there and they used every part of that buffalo for something.

(Interview # 1, p. 8)

Story Context

It was also during my initial visit with Dr. Anne that she shared with me a prayer she used on one of the plaques at her park. She placed the written prayer in front of me and as I read it she told me about its significance -- which was again reflective of the importance placed on family, community, nature, and Cree culture.

"My Grandmother Told Me"

Anne's Story Of Learning A Traditional Prayer From Her Grandmother

This is the "Buffalo Hunting Prayer" (Gives me a pamphlet with prayer on it). My grandmother told me -- you see it's not everybody that goes hunting with the Cree people. If there is a young girl just in her prime, when she's beginning to be like a woman, she is given a horse and she can go hunting and they go hunting. But before they go hunting they all go together -- because there was always a priest with them -- where they could pray. Before they didn't and sometimes the man or the hunter or the horse never returned and the buffalo had gorged the horse and killed it and the man was dead.

So then of course Father Lacombe said, "Well we can't have that happen. We have to start all over and start having a prayer and then go hunting," -- which ever way they wanted to go. They all had horses, and grandma had a horse, and she said that's the prayer that they said that morning:

"Puskwan Mostos Machew Ayumihawin" --- "Buffalo Hunting Prayer"

*Oh Great Creator,
You guided our forefathers to paths of the buffalo
They drank the cool spring waters amid the glow of the red ripened berries.
Continue to remind our brothers and sisters to remain proud of their heritage and
preserve their beliefs
So they will ensure that their children and their children's children of the future
generations will respect and understand.
The future will then be filled with happiness, like the birds that sing and the eagle that
soars high above it's nest.
Give us strength and wisdom to respect all our relations.
Dear Creator, we thank you from our hearts.
Amen.*

(Interview # 1, p. 6-8)

Story Context

During our visit to Dr. Anne's park we observed both of the plaques which gave honor to her and the buffalo spirit. The plaque nearest the monument contained the "Buffalo Hunting Prayer" written in Cree, Syllabic Writing, and English. As we stood there Dr. Anne pressed her fingers lightly against the Cree words and repeated them slowly, first in Cree, then in English. When she completed the reading of the prayer we sat down at a wooden bench near the monument -- and I knew it was time "to listen and understand" the stories of those who came before.

"Mother Remembers, Grandma Remembers"

Anne's Story Of Remembering Her Elders And Their Way Of Life

This was a regular hunting prayer. My mother-in-law, old grandma Calihoo, she gave me that to put on there (prayer on plaque mounted on large rock), you know, a long time ago she gave me this and I thought it would be wonderful. (Begins reading poem in Cree and explaining what the Cree phrases mean in English, explains how to say "buffalo", "hunting", and "prayer" in Cree) And then of course we put it in the syllabic writing also.

She was 15 years old when she was old enough so she could go buffalo hunting, and they gave her a horse, and she often talks about that you know. And generally when they went it was a group, not just a small group, a big group and they all had a kind of little prayer meeting and she said they all got together. And there was always Father Lacombe, he always followed them in case something would happen because sometimes the buffalo would kill the men and kill the horse, cause you know they were wild in them days. But I thought that was so pretty (referring to prayer). I just hope nothing ever happens to this.

At that time everybody hunted the buffalo because it was survival, eh. They didn't hunt deer, they didn't hunt moose, they didn't hunt any of those animals. But the buffalo were so numerous mother used to say that Jasper Avenue, where the streets run now, that it was just thousands of them going down, down the street and they would fork off where the High Level Bridge is now. There was a place there where they could go and drink, it was a path, and mother said that the path was about two feet deep. And they all followed one another.

I guess it was quite a little while ago. But yet my mother, you know of course mother has been passed away now for a number of years, but she remembers, grandma remembers, all them, you know. And then of course it was just Indian people, just Native people back in them days, but as soon as the white man came they killed -- foolishly. And you'd see big clumps of buffalo just lying there.

(Interview # 7, p. 71-73)

Story Context

The telling of this next story occurred during my first visit to Dr. Anne's office at The Metis Nation in mid February of 1995. Dr. Anne had been showing me her bottles of dried roots when I asked her where she would go to dig them. Her answer was one which drifted, so familiarly, to her past which was again her way of offering an explanation for the significance of her present.

"I Always Wanted To Carry That"

Anne's Story Of Why She Stayed Connected With Her Mother's Cree Culture

You can't hardly find them now close by, you have to go way off somewhere now. We used to go to Slave Lake. I used to have a friend there and she would say, "You come here," and we would go and dig them up. Nearly any kind of plant that you could find, we dug their roots. It was really good. But like I say I always wanted to carry that, you know, to make sure I understood my mother's culture, otherwise if I didn't -- well I'd be like everybody else -- not knowing.

(Interview # 2, p. 29)

Story Context

It was also during my first visit to Dr. Anne's office that I was able to admire a beautiful eagle feathered head dress which she had displayed. My eyes were first drawn to it as Dr. Anne unlocked the door of her office and invited me inside. The head dress was next to her desk on a small table. It sat on top of a styrofoam manikin head, so as to properly display the huge eagle feathers. The head band, holding the head dress in place, was made with tiny multicolored beads. It was from this colorful head band that the large brown and white eagle feathers shot out, flowing around and down the manikin's head. My interest in this head dress brought forth Dr. Anne's telling of how it serves as another way for her to stay connected to her family and culture -- another way to strengthen the connection between her past and present.

"It's A Memory Of Him"

Anne's Story About Remembering Her Maternal Grandfather

A lady friend of mine made this head dress and then we made a head there so we could put it up there. It cost pretty near \$300.00 but I was determined I was going to have one because my grandfather, my mother's father, was the chief and he used to wear a thing like that and it's a memory of him (silence). He was the chief of the Calahoo Reserve (silence).

(Interview #2, p. 27-28)

Story Context

On our drive to the Sacred Heart Church sale in early May of 1995 we drove past the old Edmonton Cemetery on 118 Street and 107 Avenue. As we went by Dr. Anne once again gave honor to the memory of another who came before her.

"My Grandfather"

Anne's Story About Remembering Her Paternal Grandfather

My grandfather Gardnier is buried here -- further down, because that part of the city was opened up first, you know. My brother and I came here one day and we looked for it and we found it right away (silence). It's in this corner somewhere (silence). Sometimes we come here -- my brother -- and we clean it (slowly). The first time we came we could hardly see the name, you know, the writing was all -- so my brother brought some paint -- and painted it over (silence).

(Interview #5, p. 55)

Story Context

This next story was shared with me in mid June of 1995 while we made our way home from an afternoon spent at The Metis Nation and going for lunch. Dr. Anne in telling of this story spoke of both a family's pain and of her own sense of connectedness to those in her community.

"I Used To Feel So Sorry For Him"

Anne's Story Of Her Compassion For Others

They have two children. The little girl -- she must be around six or something and all of a sudden she couldn't walk. They didn't know what in the heck had happened to her, you know, and oh poor him, he used to cry, you know. His poor little girl there, she couldn't walk. So they put her in the hospital for a long time. Now she's beginning to sit up and she said she thinks her legs are stronger now. She's beginning to talk about her legs now, you know (silence).

It was hard on the parents that's for sure. He never wanted to go into work, he'd say that he just wanted to go to the hospital and sit at the side of his little girl. I used to feel so sorry for him (silence).

(Interview # 6, p. 62-63)

Story Context

Dr. Anne continued to talk of the healing roots as we drove home from her office in February of 1995. We had been talking about our busy day together when she gave thanks for the great medicine Mother Nature provided for her people.

"Boiled Yarrow And Balsam Bark"

Anne's Story Of Using A Traditional Remedy To Treat Her Tired Spell

I went through a tired spell last year, I didn't have much energy but I'm feeling better now. I think it was a cold that just lasted and lasted. But I drank my boiled yarrow root and balsam bark and that helped. Yarrow and balsam bark warm you up inside, make you feel really warm inside, and it's good for a sore throat. It grows all over, it's wild, but I used to plant it too. Just boil the root and stem then I strain it with cheese cloth. It's all good but I use root and stem. I dry it first so I can keep it all year round but you can boil it fresh too.

(Interview # 2, p. 31)

And as her storytelling came to a close
she left me to quietly reflect upon the circularity of her storied life --
by sharing with me a story ending which also spoke of her beginnings ...

"And I Never Was Sick"

And you see there were six of us girls in our family, I also had two older brothers and two younger brothers. They are all gone now. Everyone are passed away now except one of my sisters, myself, and one brother -- just three of us out of the ten kids. And I always

say -- well -- our days are numbered -- we'll soon be leaving too I guess (sigh). But -- I never worry if I have to die, I know I have to die someday, so it's ok, you know, I'll die and that's it. But I feel sorry for my sister, she's losing her eyesight and my brother's got bad legs like me. He can't hardly walk. But I was always the oldest girl and I was the one that kept the best, kept life going so much easier-like. So I guess Old Noel knew what he was talking about. And I never was sick.

(Interview #1, p. 17-20)

"River Of Time"

My Own Story About My Past-Present-Future Connection With Dr. Anne

When I was a young child my father spent time working near Fort Chipewyan on a floating barge which served as a federal fish plant for packing and shipping commercially caught fish. This barge was located at a delta on the Athabasca River where the river runs into the southwest mouth of Lake Athabasca. This place became locally known as Tokyo Snye because many Japanese men had worked on this fish barge during the Japanese internment of World War II.

A couple years earlier a Metis man, named Alex Irvine, lived and worked aboard this same barge on Lake Athabasca. Alex Irvine, a one time commercial fisherman himself, worked as a fish filleter on this federally run barge. After spending many years working at the Lake Athabasca operation Alex decided to return to Edmonton to take a job at the federally run fish plant in the city.

While purchasing supplies for the job he was to begin on Lake Athabasca, my father stopped in at the federal fish plant in Edmonton. It was here, as he loaded fishing supplies onto a truck, that he was asked about his destination. "Tokyo Snye," he told the plant workers, "I'm on my way to Lake Athabasca."

One of the men stepped over to my father and told him he knew the place well. This man told my father that he had spent many years barging fish all over the Athabasca

watershed. Interested in finding out more information about his upcoming job, my father introduced himself and this man, Alex Irvine, began to talk of his years spent working on Lake Athabasca.

When my father completed his work at Lake Athabasca he, like Alex, returned to take up part time work at the federal fish plant in Edmonton. My father and mother were now working as licensed commercial fishermen in Alberta but during the lake closures my father would work at the federal fish plant. It was during this time that Alex and my father became friends.

A few years later, during the commercial fishery of Wabamun Lake, Alex borrowed some fishing equipment from my parents so he could run his own commercial fishing crew. After the lake had closed for fishing my parents went to Alex's apartment to collect the gear. When they arrived they were invited in for dinner by Alex's lady friend from the apartment upstairs -- Anne Anderson.

During dinner Anne Anderson told my parents of the Cree language and culture classes she taught at her downtown business known as "Cree Productions". My parents in turn talked of their livelihood as commercial fishermen and hunting and fishing guides. The sharing of these traditional ways of life intrigued both my parents and Anne. As the evening drew to a close the four of them made arrangements to meet for another dinner at my parent's home.

I was seven years old when Alex and Anne came over for this dinner of wild goose. I can still recall sitting at our kitchen table with these special guests. The reason that this image has remained so clear in my mind after all of these years is because it was the first time I remember having heard the Cree language spoken.

And you see, there was a sharing that occurred that evening. Anne shared of her Cree language as she talked with my parents. My parents in return shared of their life stories by showing Anne slides of their traditional way of life. By sharing of themselves a

connection was established and strengthened -- a connection which intertwined my parents lives, and eventually mine, with Anne's unfolding life.

It was not long after that my parents joined Anne's classes so she could teach them the Cree language. My parents also provided Anne with some materials for use in her culture classes. Anne was interested in using different tanned animal hides for discussion and display in her classes so my parents gave her some. A few years later they also provided Anne with some mounted moose and deer horns for the grand opening of her "Native Heritage and Culture Centre". During this same time my father and Alex trapped beaver together for some of Anne's friends who lived just north of the city. Shortly afterwards my parents also attended Alex and Anne's wedding.

* * *

And so it happened ... that my family's past connection with Dr. Anne flowed gently into the present waters of my own life. For it was the twisting and turning of the river of time which carried in its current the seeds for my present work -- seeds which will grow, strengthen, and give off new life as they are carried further down this winding river into my own future.

In learning from Dr. Anne's sense of connectedness I am again reminded of my own past-present-future connections -- and so I, like her, pause to remember and honor my past in order to gain an understanding of the present and a vision for the future.

Personal Insights

Dr. Anne's stories reflect the keen awareness she embodies of her interconnected past-present-future. By telling of her past she demonstrates a clear understanding of how her past has shaped and influenced her present and inevitably her future. She is aware of

the way in which her ancestral river of time has flowed through her past, present, and future life; she is also aware of the healing and strengthening sources which flow upon this watery current.

Dr. Anne is consciously aware that her past has fostered her current way of being. She sees that the close connectedness she shared with her family, community, Cree culture, and nature in the past have in turn developed into strong connections in her present life -- and likely beyond into her future. Her past, as reflected in her stories, was tightly intertwined with these very elements -- of family, community, Cree culture, and nature -- and so they have become deeply valued ways of being in the world which she in turn has taught and modeled for the next generations. Dr. Anne's storytelling reflects her heightened sense of always knowing what (Cree culture and nature) and who (family and community) came before her. Her sense of connectedness with these very elements has provided her with the healing medicine she needed to remain strong and purposeful throughout her life. Her stories then are steeped in her past thus flavoring her present and future.

And in this fashion, Dr. Anne's past has flowed like a river into the waters of her present -- and will likely continue even further into the bay of her future. This ancestral river has carried in its current the very knowledge which has shaped Dr. Anne's life. This current has flowed through her life producing an almost circular pattern as Dr. Anne learned traditions from her Elders, lived in respect of these traditional ways, and then eventually taught the cultural knowledge, family background, and traditional ways of being to other people.

This cycle of learning, living, and then teaching ancestral knowledge is highly representative of the interconnected generations which have influenced Dr. Anne's life. For it has been Dr. Anne's connectedness with her ancestral past which has in turn fostered her own sense of importance and respect for family, community, Cree culture,

and nature. An example reflective of Dr. Anne's interconnected generations is found in the way that Dr. Anne's grandmother taught her own two daughters the Cree language, these daughters in turn taught Dr. Anne the language, and Dr. Anne eventually taught the language to later generations.

These ancestral learnings -- of honoring one's past in order to remain close to one's family, community, culture, and nature -- are the traditional ways of life which reflect Dr. Anne's philosophy of health and healing. It seems that these ancestral learnings are Dr. Anne's way of achieving health and healing. Her philosophy of health and healing seems centered around maintaining a strong connectedness with her ancestors, whether through memory, story, keepsake, or tradition. Her connectedness with her ancestral past has served to reinforce the importance of living in a connected fashion with family, community, culture, and nature in her present life.

For Dr. Anne, 'being connected' seems to be the key element necessary in achieving health and healing. Her way of life, as portrayed in her stories, has reflected this philosophy of connectedness since her storylines are threaded together by a continual connectedness between herself and her family, community, culture, and nature in both the past and present sense. Being connected in this way seems to have provided Dr. Anne with a sense of self (who came before her and who she is) and a sense of place (where she belongs). It seems as though Dr. Anne's reinforced link with her past has provided her with much strength, courage, and vision in her present life. These learned ways of living have filled her life with guidance, pride, and meaning; these traditional ways have shaped her philosophy of health and healing as the watery current of time flowed through her past and into her present.

Dr. Anne's medicine -- her very source of strength and healing -- seems to be found in these interconnected generations, which have characterized her life and provided her with the togetherness necessary for health and healing. These interconnected

generational relationships can be likened to a river of time, an ancestral river of time, which flows through her past, present, and eventually into her future -- carrying in its current the medicine of connectedness which, in turn, surrounds her with the healing embrace of family, community, Cree culture, and nature.

THE CHARACTERS THAT GAVE HER LIFE

Dr. Anne's stories speak of the characters that gave her life -- her mother, grandmother, aunt, Old Neel, the Spirit of the Buffalo, and the Creator. It is these most important of story characters who shaped and influenced her past, present, and future. These characters taught her, inspired her, strengthened her, and filled her life with meaning and direction. These characters understood healing and in turn showed Anne how to create health and healing in her own life. Dr. Anne's storylines reflect her deepest respect and honor for these life-giving characters; through her storylines she speaks of these significant characters and of the way in which they breathed life into her soul.

Dr. Anne depicts her mother as the most significant character in her life-story. Her mother is portrayed as a generous, kind, and wise woman who influenced Anne's life by teaching her the value of maintaining close ties with her family, community, Cree culture, and nature. Her mother's lifelong teachings were sounded out time and time again as parted lips gave breath to another storytelling. During these storytelling moments Dr. Anne revisited another time and place in which the seeds of her mother's ancestral wisdom were sprinkled with care upon the watery current flowing through Anne's own life.

In Dr. Anne's stories her mother is portrayed as a highly respected professor who reminded Anne of the real values found in life ...

My mom although she had no education, you know, she was just like a professor, she could talk about anything. Whatever I know is from her. It's from her teachings. (Interview # 4, p. 45-47)

Dr. Anne's mother modeled a closeness with family members and in doing so inspired Anne to value the bonds of family ...

Mom used to go digging the medicines with grandma. That's where she learned from, from our grandmother. (Interview # 6, p. 67)

So she said to us kids, "Tonight we're going to have a meeting. When dad comes from the barn, after supper, we're going to all sit and we'll have a meeting." So after supper we had a meeting -- and she knew how to. (Interview # 1, p. 17-20)

When my cousin got married ... mother and aunty got me -- I can always remember it -- I had long hair and they rolled up my hair and put it in this great big ball on top of my head and I had this gray silk dress. (Interview # 8, p. 88)

Dr. Anne's mother also encouraged Anne to spend time with family members so she could learn more about the Cree culture and in return help others ...

And mother would say, "You go over there now," every so often she'd say, "it's your turn to go stay with aunty and you'll learn more of the culture." And that's what we were continuously doing. (Interview # 1, p. 17-20)

My mother made me go back and stay with them [aunt and uncle] when he became sick so I could help out my aunt. (Interview # 8, p. 82-83)

Learning and respecting the value of family influenced Dr. Anne throughout her childhood past and beyond into her adulthood; her mother's teachings shaped Anne into a caring woman who was able to recognize and act upon the importance of family ...

I kept mother for years of her last days (silence) my mother wrote to me and said, "You know, I think you should come and try to stay with me because I'm needing help." Poor mom I thought -- I'm so glad I came home. Poor old mom she needed help. (Interview # 4, p. 49-51)

Dr. Anne's mother was also portrayed as the main story character who taught Anne the importance of maintaining close ties with the people of their community. Her mother maintained close ties with community members by showing great respect for them and by caring for them when they needed help ...

This old medicine man wanted to see me ... he had heard that my mom thought I wasn't going to live and he came to see me ... and dad came in and told mom and

*so mom said, "Well, I guess we had better listen to what he wants to do."
(Interview # 1, p. 11-15)*

*And my mom used to tell my dad, "You'd better go give Old Noel a piece of pork ... go give him a piece of pork or something." Or mother would cook it and then take it to him, he could eat that you know, and she would send him a bannock.
(Interview # 1, p. 14-15)*

And mother used to say, "Now you're going to go give them some butter, give them some milk, give them some potatoes or pork," you know. She was always sending them something, you know. So wonderful -- mother was such a kind person. (Interview # 6, p. 67-70)

You see my mother -- was known by all Native people especially if they dealt with medicines because mother was a great one for medicines they kept them for anybody that called, you know. (Interview # 6, p. 67)

Dr. Anne's mother set an example for her daughter by acting with great respect and generosity towards the people of their community. When Anne was old enough her mother also expected her to take part in the community spirit by helping and caring for the community members; in this way Anne learned the importance of being connected with others ...

And when I was big enough now to run errands for my mother -- this is what she'd say -- "Now you go and visit the first grandma in the first little old log house," and she'd say, "and give her a pound of butter and give her a bannock or else give her a roast of beef." (Interview # 1, p. 14-15)

Twelve years I was a nurse in St. Albert Mother would say, "If the sisters want you, you go." And then the first thing you'd see was the sister coming down to our place, "Oh, we need your girl to come and help." Mother would say, "You go." I'd be taking care of the elders and feeding them. (Interview # 8, p. 84)

Dr. Anne learned the value of being connected with her community and even when her father died Anne seemed to have a sense of the way in which her mother's friendships

could help heal some of her mother's grief ...

We sold everything we moved all the furniture to St. Albert -- but it was a good way, ... a lot of [mother's] friends were living in St. Albert -- a lot of her old friends (silence). (Interview # 6, p. 63-66)

Dr. Anne's mother was also portrayed as the most significant story figure who taught Anne the value of her Cree culture. It was Anne's mother who reminded her of the importance of staying close to her cultural roots ...

My mother used to say, "It's [culture] part of you, you can't -- forget about it at all." She'd say, "It's part of me and I want my children to keep that also." And I used to think well gee, poor old mom, although she wasn't an educated women she knew, you know. (Interview # 5, p. 52-56)

"Well never mind," she said, "I don't care what the priest says. God gave me a language and I'm going to speak it. I'm Indian and you kids remember everyone of you is part of your mother, you are part Indian." And she would lecture us as if she was like a professor and she couldn't read nor write, never did And you see that's how come I know so much, my mom taught me. She taught me the culture and beadwork and everything -- oh, there's so much to know. She was like a teacher. That's what I always say. (Interview # 1, p. 17-20)

It was her mother who also taught Anne the Cree culture by carrying on traditional ways of life which in turn left a lasting impact on Anne in that she learned these traditions, valued them, followed them, and then taught them in her later life ...

And because mom said he was, we believed it, you know, that he was a medicine man. (Interview # 6, p. 67-70)

Mother always took me [to the Lac St. Anne pilgrimage] because I was the older girl and she'd say, "You're always working so we'll take you to the pilgrimage." (Interview # 8, p. 83-84)

"Speak Cree," my dear mother would say ... "It is our beautiful language, I love it

and I'm proud of being Indian. I want you to love it and be proud of it too. How can you stay close to my heart if you do not speak my language?" " Yah, poor mom, she was so proud she was Indian, you know, she wasn't one who wanted to be French or something else. She always wanted to be just as she was, you know. She was very proud of her culture. She always said that I should [teach Cree], "You can," she'd say, "you can do it!" She said, "Because you went to the white man's school and you know the syllabic writing, you can do it!" She would just say it, she would demand it, that I write it. And I did and I was glad I did. (Interview # 7, p. 74)

When I used to go lecturing I used to have to go talk about the reserve ... and one lady, she got up and she said, "Why is it the Indians are so lazy they can't even get up and plant grain?" And I said to her it's because you don't even know anything about the Indian people And that's how they started farming -- that's how they started to have grain to plant. And they'd plant very carefully, just a little, two or three cup fulls here and then they'd start some more in another place. And then they'd thrash the grain. And that's what they did. Mother said that's the truth, that's what they used to do. (Interview # 8, p. 89-90)

Learning and valuing her Cree culture was the way in which Dr. Anne strengthened her connections with her ancestral past; by staying close to her culture she was able to enhance her past-present-future connections and thus enhance her own sense of self ...

But like I say I always wanted to carry that, you know, to make sure I understood my mother's culture, otherwise if I didn't -- well I'd be like everybody else -- not knowing. (Interview # 2, p. 29)

Dr. Anne's mother also taught Anne the importance of nature and its healing abilities. Through her mother's actions Anne learned the value of being close to nature and relying on its offerings ...

Mom used to go digging the medicines ... they had bags, you know, like a half a hundred pound flour sack. You could smell the aroma from those bags, it was just so wonderful, you know. (Interview # 6, p. 67)
That is what my mother and grandmother used to plant and they'd take those little

roots and boil them and then we'd have to drink that medicine ... (Interview # 2, p. 26)

And mother used to get the boys to make little houses near the lake and they put lots of hay in them. And she [the goose] knew very well what they were trying to do, that they were trying to help her so she could raise her family there. And she did, she raised twelve geese the first year. (Interview # 8, p. 86-88)

After we sold everything we moved all the furniture to St. Albert -- but it was a good way, mother she had wonderful gardens and she went picking berries. (Interview # 6, p. 63-66)

Dr. Anne's mother also spoke of nature's offerings which left a lasting impression on Anne in that she grew to have a deep respect for nature ...

At that time everybody hunted the buffalo because it was survival, eh ... mother used to say that Jasper Avenue, where the streets run now, that it was just thousands of them going down, down the street and they would fork off where the High Level Bridge is now. There was a place there where they could go and drink, it was a path, and mother said that the path was about two feet deep ... my mother, you know of course mother has been past away now for a number of years, but she remembers ... (Interview # 7, p. 71-73)

Dr. Anne's life was greatly influenced by her mother's closeness with nature; Dr. Anne in turn learned of nature's healing abilities and, like her mother, utilized these gifts in her own life ...

I went through a tired spell last year, I didn't have much energy ... but I drank my boiled yarrow root and balsam bark and that helped ... (Interview # 2, p. 31)

Dr. Anne's maternal grandmother is another very significant character presented in Anne's life-story. Her grandmother, like her mother, was an inspiring figure who strengthened Anne by sharing a close bond with her. It was a special relationship Anne shared with her grandmother, one which filled Anne with much regard for the value of

family, community, Cree culture, and nature.

Dr. Anne's grandmother shared in her life since her birth. Her grandmother shared time with Anne and in doing so taught her the value of maintaining close family ties and thus a connectedness with her past ...

I was so small when I was born ... mother said she couldn't put me in a bed ... but grandma -- grandma made me a bed out of a rabbit, out of a shoe box, and she wrapped it with rabbit furs ... my aunt and grandma were there, looking after my mom ... (Interview # 1, p. 11-15)

Her grandmother, like her mother, also taught Anne the importance of sharing a connectedness with the community. Dr. Anne learned her own community spirit by observing the generous acts of kindness her grandmother demonstrated to those around her ...

People would come for her [grandma] all the time, you know. They'd be sick and she would grab this great big bag and away she'd go. And she'd look after the sick there. She'd boil medicines and she'd pray -- and she'd pray. (Interview # 8, p. 84-85)

Dr. Anne's grandmother was also portrayed as a significant teacher of the Cree culture. Her grandmother encouraged Anne to stay close to her cultural roots so she could maintain a connectedness with her past in order to give her strength and vision in her present and future ...

Grandma would always say, "Listen -- listen to your mother, listen to your grandmother, they have everything, they don't forget these things." (Interview # 5, p. 52-56)

That is what my mother and grandmother used to plant and they'd take those little roots and boil them and then we'd have to drink that medicine, you know, if we had a sore throat or something ... What I know about the Cree language and culture is through my mom and grandma, you know, cause they used to tell me

these things. (Interview # 2, p. 26)

Dr. Anne's grandmother shared her knowledge of medicinal herbs and roots with Anne thus enhancing Anne's respect for nature and its healing properties ...

Those are wild asters ... Mother and my grandma taught me. My grandma would say, "This is what this medicine is for." ... Generally mother would come with us and grandma was always glad to show us what to pick, you know. (Interview # 8, p. 84-85)

We never were sick. We always drank our teas. Grandma always had her pail and she would put her roots and things in there and boil it. She would always come and feel us and say, "I think you're going to have a cold, you have to drink some medicine," and we would and we never were sick you know. (Interview # 1, p. 17-20)

Dr. Anne's aunt (her mother's sister) is also portrayed as a very significant character in Dr. Anne's stories. Her aunt is presented as another highly respected teacher who taught Anne the value of being closely connected to her family, community, Cree culture, and nature.

The special relationship Anne shared with her aunt was one which again enhanced Anne's sense of importance for family. Within her stories Anne portrayed her relationship with her aunt as one which taught her the importance of being both strong enough to help others -- and be helped by others ...

When I was born ... my aunt and grandma were there, looking after my mom (Interview # 1, p. 11-15)

And then all of a sudden we saw the boys going back to this dancing ... and they would wave at us, you know. And aunty would see them and she would look at us and we'd be scared ... aunty would say ... "We're trying to teach them properly -- not to get themselves into trouble or to hurt themselves in some way or another." (Interview # 8, p. 78-80)

One time when I was at aunty's ... she had a terrible headache in the morning. So I guess aunty and uncle talked and she said I'm sure I could go with him and talk for him. So I got ready and we went to Spruce Grove. (Interview # 8, p. 80-82)

Aunty couldn't -- read so she said, "You'll have to open that box and see what's in there." So I had to open that box and I had to count that money and there were cheques in there and all sorts of things. Poor aunty -- she started to cry. And I said, "He's thinking of you now. He's thinking that you'll live well. While you're on earth you'll be living well and not worrying" ... I helped her make bread -- there was always so much to do to help my aunt with my uncle. (Interview # 8, p. 82-83)

Dr. Anne's aunt is also portrayed as another character who taught Anne the value of being connected with her community. The stories Anne tells about her aunt again reflects the value her aunt placed in the caring spirit of their community ...

I lived with [aunty] sometimes for months. And every week or every second week we'd go for rations, you know, like fresh meat, bread, lard, jam -- and then we'd all go to the lake there was about ten or twelve wagons there ... (Interview # 8, p. 78-80)

[Aunty] had a very bad headache so my uncle went and got a little old grandma that had wild medicines, you know. He went and got her and she boiled herbs in a pail and then she said, "Drink this." (Interview # 8, p. 82-83)

Spending time with her aunt also exposed Anne to more of the Cree culture. Her aunt is portrayed as another highly respected teacher who encouraged Anne to stay close to her cultural roots ...

My aunt, my mom's sister, I stayed with her for a long time ... She would teach me all kinds of things and she would teach me medicines and she also wanted us to follow the way of the elders ... (Interview # 5, p. 52-56)

My aunt spoke mostly Cree. And I was the oldest girl. And my mom used to say, "Spend your time there and you'll learn Cree properly." So we had to listen to her. Aunty spoke a little more Cree than my mother did. (Interview # 8, p. 80-82)

Spending time with her aunt also reinforced Anne's respect for and reliance on nature. Anne was further encouraged by her aunt to hold nature's gifts in high regard since her aunt also used the natural healing remedies to nurse herself ...

She had a very bad headache ... a little old grandma that had wild medicines ... boiled herbs in a pail and then she said, "Drink this." And so aunty started drinking this and she said that she started feeling better right away -- her headache was leaving ... (Interview # 8, p. 82-83)

Old Noel is another very significant character in Dr. Anne's life-stories. Old Noel was the medicine man who came to visit Anne only days after her birth. The impact of that prophetic visit seemed to alter the course of Anne's life -- for Old Noel seemed to 'tell' of Anne's life before she lived it. The significance of Old Noel cannot be overlooked since it was this old medicine man's hope and wisdom which provided Anne with a story to live by -- a story in which she was given life ...

And so he looked at me and the first thing he said was, "I want to see her hands." And I was wrapped up in a rabbit skin so I could keep warm and he pulled my hands out and he said, "Oh my, she is very small but," he said to my dad, "this women is going to be a great women and you will be so proud of her when she grows up." My dad (lowers voice) didn't really know what he was talking about but the man said, "She'll never be sick and she'll be big and strong and she'll do wonderful things in life and you'll be proud of her many times." And then he said, "Well, I guess I'll go now but don't think this baby is going to die. It's not going to die, it's going to grow and she'll be so big and sirong." (Interview # 1, p. 11-15)

The significance of Old Noel's prophecy is also evident in that Dr. Anne told of this story often. She shared this birth story with me on three different occasions and with each telling it became clear that Old Noel left a lasting impact on Dr. Anne's life; an impact which filled her life with much strength, direction, and meaning ...

But -- what he wanted to see was my hands. And mother said she took this

shoe box, well my aunt took the shoe box because mother was still in bed because I was just born, and he took the shoe box and said, "I'd like to see her hands." And mother said, "You had the smallest little hands and long little arms." And she said that the doctor, the old medicine man, pulled out my hands and said, "Oh my," he said, "she's so tiny but it's very true," he said, "she won't die, she'll live for many years, she'll live till a long more than anybody that I even can talk about." Cause he said, "She'll grow to be a strong women and she'll never be sick." And that's true, I never was sick in my life you know. (Interview # 6, p. 67-70)

Mother used to say that this old medicine man would say, "Why do you worry? She won't die. Look at her hands." He wanted to look at the inside of my hands. He'd say, "Look at her hands, she's a women who's going to do a lot. You'll be proud of her and there's no need to be worried about her passing away." And whatever he had said came true, you know (silence). (Interview # 8, p. 76)

Dr. Anne credits Old Noel for having been able to foretell her future. She recognizes that his prophecy came true; her past did become her future. Her keen awareness of this provided Anne with a lifelong reminder of her past-present-future connection, that is, how her past flows into her present -- and beyond into her future ...

And then he said ... "But don't think this baby is going to die. It's not going to die, it's going to grow and she'll be so big and strong." And look how tall I am, I was about this size when I was fourteen! So he knew what he was talking about (laughing). (Interview #1, p. 11-15)

I never was sick, you know, and when I was a young girl going out working, I used to go out and work for white people on a farm. That's all I knew was to work on a farm. I used to go there working and the people used to say, "As small as you are, you're so healthy and you're so -- that nothing will ever happen to you. You'll always be strong." That's what this old man would tell my dad and my mom, you know, -- that's the man (laughing) -- medicine man. (Interview # 6, p. 67-70)

And you see there were six of us girls in our family, I also had two older brothers and two younger brothers. They are all gone now. Everyone are past away now except one of my sisters, myself, and one brother -- just three of us out of the ten

kids. And I always say -- well -- our days are numbered -- we'll (sigh) soon be leaving too I guess. But -- I never worry if I have to die, I know I have to die someday, so it's ok, you know, I'll die and that's it. But I feel sorry for my sister, she's losing her eyesight and my brother's got bad legs like me. He can't hardly walk. But I was always the oldest girl and I was the one that kept the best, kept life going so much easier like. So I guess Old Noel knew what he was talking about. And I never was sick. (Interview #1, p. 17-20)

While Old Noel represents the foretelling of Anne's future, the Spirit of the Buffalo is a significant character which represents the honoring of her past. Dr. Anne tells about the Spirit of the Buffalo as a way of representing, and weaving together, the cycle of life as well as the cycle of her own life. She portrays this Spirit with a sense of importance since the Spirit of the Buffalo provided strength and life to the Cree people as well as to her. The Spirit of the Buffalo is therefore representative of survival: more specifically it is representative of Dr. Anne's own life and the way in which her own past-present-future connections provided her with the strength and understanding necessary to carry on and teach her traditional Cree way of life ...

Here is the "The Spirit of the Buffalo" (Shows me a speech in notebook). This is from when we were making the monument -- this is what I had to write. Everybody joined -- whoever knew something about the Spirit of the Buffalo because the buffalo is the most powerful animal eh, he's so big and strong. And he's survival -- because everybody hunted buffalo long ago, not just a few people, everybody -- even the white man that first came, they hunted buffalo. They used the hide first of all to make a teepee, to be warm, you know, to make a place to stay. And everything was so rich, you know that I used to say, "Oh my goodness, the buffalo is survival all right," because there was so much meat there and they used every part of that buffalo for something. (Interview # 1, p. 8)

My mother-in-law, old grandma Calihoo ... she was 15 years old when she was old enough so she could go buffalo hunting, and they gave her a horse, and she often talks about that you know. And generally when they went it was a group, not just a small group, a big group and they all had a kind of little prayer meeting and she said they all got together ... At that time everybody hunted the

buffalo because it was survival, eh. (Interview # 7, p. 71-73)

My grandmother told me -- she said that's the prayer that they said that morning:

"Puskwan Mostos Machew Ayumihawin" --- "Buffalo Hunting Prayer"

Oh Great Creator,

You guided our forefathers to paths of the buffalo

They drank the cool spring waters amid the glow of the red ripened berries.

*Continue to remind our brothers and sisters to remain proud of their heritage and
preserve their beliefs*

*So they will ensure that their children and their children's children of the future
generations will respect and understand.*

*The future will then be filled with happiness, like the birds that sing and the eagle
that soars high above it's nest.*

Give us strength and wisdom to respect all our relations.

Dear Creator, we thank you from our hearts.

Amen.

(Interview # 1, p. 6-8)

Dr. Anne's storytelling portrayed the meaningful relationships she shared with her mother, grandmother, aunt, Old Noel, and the Spirit of the Buffalo. These story characters were clearly influential in shaping Dr. Anne's health and healing philosophy.

Another character portrayed, yet from a distance, was that of the Creator. Dr. Anne portrayed the Creator as a character who influenced and directed the lives of those around her. The significance of the Creator was portrayed through the eyes of the story characters as well as when Anne made reference to the Creator as a belief generally held by Native people. In this fashion, Dr. Anne's connection with the Creator was portrayed in a subtle, yet implied, manner throughout her storytelling. The Creator's influence in her life was therefore embedded in the undercurrent of her stories ...

But her and her husband prayed, you know, and what I understood, part of it, what I understood, was she said, you know -- "Dear Creator, you know, my brother has arrived and he is very sick. We need your help also I am depending

*on Mother Earth's medicines to help him ... Please help us, we depend on you so much, we depend on Mother Earth because she provided the remedies." And it was so nice to hear them praying, you know, and they whispered, they whispered back and forth as they prayed And that old man, he was just so happy, you know, and he was just so straight. He went walking along the road, he didn't care, you know, he just said, "I prayed to the Creator to help me and that was all I needed to do because I knew I was getting help from the Creator too."
(Interview #5, p. 57-61)*

You know because our grandparents, my grandparents especially, used to always, always, always tell us, "We are just -- so thankful that the Creator is helping us right along, you know ... (Interview #5, p. 57-61)

*There is a spiritual Creator that is above us that is supposed to kind of guide us along. And mom used to always say, "It is a very narrow path so you've always got to try to stay straight on this path so you don't get into any trouble."
(Interview # 4, p. 45-47)*

Long ago they never went to church, they never did anything, you know, but they prayed together, you know -- it was just togetherness -- and they prayed and the Spirit was always there. It was always something that could -- that would survive because it wasn't a forgotten thing -- it was always with them, with the Native people, you know. (Interview # 5, p. 57-61)

"Ancestral Waterways"

My Story Of Remembering And Honoring Dr. Anne As A Character That Gave Me Life

The characters in Dr. Anne's stories gave her life in that they taught her ways of being in the world around her. These most significant of characters taught her Cree culture and the importance of staying close to that culture. It was also these characters who surrounded Dr. Anne with a community of togetherness which, in turn, shaped her into the generous and caring person she became. A sense of connectedness with and respect for nature was another teaching which these characters inbred into Dr. Anne's life.

The manner in which Dr. Anne portrays these characters in her life-stories reflects

much about their importance as influencing agents in her own life. The fact that Dr. Anne honors her memories of these people says much in itself. She remembers these people because of the significant impact they made on her life. She talks of, and therefore portrays, those who came before her with much admiration, kindness, and respect. Dr. Anne remembers and honors these people because they are her teachers and mentors -- they are the life-giving and life-healing spirits who are in essence the characters who gave her life.

And so as I reflect upon Dr. Anne's significance as a character in my own life I am brought full circle in that I too recognize that she has, in turn, passed onto me the importance of these same ways of being which were taught to her so long ago. I see that the echo of these same ancestral teachings has flowed down the river of time -- from them, to her, and now to me. It is as if I have taken part as a branching creek in this ancestral waterway, and like Dr. Anne, have become a part of something bigger and stronger than myself.

The importance of my relationship with Dr. Anne is one which seems similar to the branching waterway of connectedness she shared with her own Elders. For ours has been a relationship which has filled me with much respect and regard for her wise storytelling spirit and as a result of this treasured relationship she is, and will always be, a remembered character in my own storied life-tellings. And so Dr. Anne in sharing of her storied life has flowed downstream into my own young and watery path reminding me all the while of the way in which our pasts connect with our presents -- and eventually flow into our futures. My relationship with her has reminded me of the healing that can be found in remembering and honoring -- remembering and honoring my own life stories, my own cultural roots, and my own ancestral river of life.

Personal Insights

Our lives are touched, and changed, in some way by the people we come together with. Dr. Anne's life-stories provide evidence of this -- for it is the characters within her stories who influenced and shaped the direction of her life. These most important of story characters touched her path and gave her life. They were her teachers, mentors, and spirit guides who reminded her of the invaluable healing essence found in maintaining a deep connectedness with family, community, Cree culture, and nature. These characters breathed life and learning into her soul and as a result she was strengthened and inspired while her life's path was filled with meaning and direction. Her story characters were the influencing agents who filled Anne's life with the knowledge and values which flowed through her past-present-future -- all the while teaching her the art of creating health and healing within her life.

Dr. Anne's portrayal of these characters and the relationships she shared with them speaks of her philosophy of health and healing. In telling of these characters and the impact they had on her life she also reflects her own sense of value for the teachings they passed onto her. Thus her portrayal of these characters provides voice to her philosophy of health and healing; by telling of these characters the significance she places on her connectedness with family, community, culture, and nature unfolds into a far reaching and encompassing philosophy which brings strength and meaning into the circle of her life.

SCENES OF TOGETHERNESS

Dr. Anne's stories are a reflection of the shared scenes of togetherness which have characterized her life. Her life-stories speak of a coming together -- whereupon the interconnectedness of her family, community, Cree culture, and nature are illuminated and celebrated. These scenes of togetherness flow through her life-stories, all the while reaffirming the strengthening nature of these interconnected sources of healing.

This interconnected 'web of life' is reflected in Dr. Anne's life-stories through the characters who come together in the shared scenes. These characters celebrate their connectedness with family, community, culture, and nature in many unique scenes and through many different actions -- despite the variations, all of these scenes share in a common portrayal of togetherness.

Dr. Anne portrayed the act of learning about the importance of an interconnected family, community, Cree culture, and nature as but one type of action which gave way to these scenes of togetherness ...

What I know about the Cree language and culture is through my mother and grandma, you know, cause they used to tell me these things. (Interview # 2, p. 26)

And we learned ... from our mother -- the same that grandma said we were told by our mother's. That's why grandma would always say, "Listen -- listen to your mother, listen to your grandmother, they have everything, they don't forget these things." My aunt, my mom's sister, I stayed with her for a long time. Aunty wanted us to teach her English, you know, and so -- that's the way it was. Mother and Aunty spoke a bit of French too because they were in a convent. She would teach me all sorts of things and she would teach me medicines and she also wanted us to follow the way of the elders -- and that religion was so important ... (Interview # 5, p. 52-56)

Mother and my grandma taught me. My grandma would say, "This is what this medicine is for." People would come for her all the time, you know ... Generally mother would come with us and grandma was always glad to show us what to

pick, you know. (Interview # 8, p. 84-85)

And then they made it interesting how they made little bows and snares, setting their traps, and they'd show them how. That was something the boys liked. They could sit there for hours and listen to their grandparents. (Interview # 5, p. 52-56)

So she said to us kids, "Tonight we're going to have a meeting. When dad comes from the barn, after supper, we're going to all sit and we'll have a meeting." So that was ok then. When dad came home she and dad went to the bedroom and I guess she was telling him about this. So after supper we had a meeting -- and she knew how to. She said, "I think it was very unfair for the priest to say that because I was given that language, my grandfather and grandmother were given that language. That's how come I speak it. I learned from my mother and dad." She explained everything so nice and after that she said, "We don't have to go speak Cree at school -- you guys go there and you learn English -- just English -- the rest we'll learn at home, I will teach you in the culture. (Interview # 1, p. 17-20)

"Speak Cree," my dear mother would say. And we all spoke, the eleven of us, except the two youngest ones, they didn't speak very fluent. But the rest all did, we kept it, you know. There was eleven children, one died, when it was small. I had four brothers and six sisters. Yah, these are the words -- of my mother -- "It is our beautiful language, I love it and I'm proud of being Indian. I want you to love it and be proud of it too. How can you stay close to my heart if you do not speak my language?" (Interview # 7, p. 74)

The act of doctoring and caring for the health of others also made for many scenes of togetherness which again portrayed the interconnections between family, community, Cree culture, and nature ...

Grandma always had her pail and she would put her roots and things in there and boil it. She would always come feel us and say, "I think you're going to have a cold, you have to drink some medicine," and we would and we were never sick, you know. (Interview # 1, p. 17-20)

She had a very bad headache so my uncle went and got a little old grandma that had wild medicines, you know. He went and got her and she boiled herbs in a

pail and then she said, "Drink this." And so aunty started drinking this and she said that she started feeling better right away — her headache was leaving, you know. And she was so glad that she was feeling better now. Every morning my uncle got up and gave her a cup of tea, right when she got out of bed. (Interview # 8, p. 82-83)

My mother made me go back and stay with them [aunt and uncle] when he became sick so I could help out my aunt. I helped her make bread -- there was always so much to do to help my aunt with my uncle. (Interview # 8, p. 82-83)

Twelve years I was a nurse in St. Albert. Many times I wanted to quit but mother would say, "If the sisters want you, you go." ... I'd be taking care of the elders and feeding them ... most of the elders were Cree speaking people so I'd talk to them. (Interview # 8, p. 84)

After dad died ... my brothers said, "We're not going to stay here, we're going to go away." I had an uncle in Lac La Biche and so he said, "Send the boys down here and I'll look after them and I'll get them jobs, there's a lot of jobs here." They were [fish] filleters. (Interview # 6, p. 63-66)

I can remember one time, a long time ago, we went when I was gathering roots and things over at McLennan, that's a town north of here. And there was this little old grandmother that made medicine. While I was visiting her she said, "Oh, there's one of our," — if it's a man they say, "it's one of our brother's coming and I know that he's sick because just look at the way he's walking eh." And he was so stooped over, you know. So — she told her husband "Go and meet him because," she said, "he looks like he is very sick." And he was carrying a little pail, this means that she would make medicine for him and he would take it home so that he could drink it. (Interview # 5, p. 57-61)

And then she said to him, "Now, before you go we are going to have some hot tea and bannock." And she had some ground up dried meat, pemmican. And she said, "We're going to have all this and we're going to all sit." And he said, "I can't go and sit at the table because the white lady is there." I was the white lady, that's what he said. And she said to him, "No, she's not a white lady. She is a Native lady like us, her mother is a full blooded Native women." And he looked at me so funny and I started talking to him and I said, "You come here and you sit down right here and don't be ashamed," I said, "don't feel bad about anything because we are all one, we belong to Mother Earth, we depend on her remedies

and we depend on a lot of things to keep ourselves alive." And he kept saying, "Yes, yes, yes." But I was talking in Cree to him, you know. (Interview # 5, p. 57-61)

My mother wrote to me and said, "You know, I think you should come and try to stay with me because I'm needing help." When I got home after a while I noticed that when she got up she was more active, you know, and she wanted to be with me now. But she could hardly walk. Poor mom I thought -- I'm so glad I came home. Poor old mom she needed help. (Interview # 4, p. 49-51)

Acts of generosity and sharing also gave way to many scenes of togetherness which again reflected the interconnectedness of Dr. Anne's family, community, Cree culture, and nature ...

And my mom used to tell my dad, "You'd better go give Old Noel a piece of pork." See, we had cattle, we had pigs, and we had horses and so every so often dad would butcher a cow or a pig and she would say to my dad, "You go give him a piece of pork or something." Or mother would cook it and then take it to him, he could eat that you know, and she would send him a bannock. Bannock at one time was the only kind of bread they had. So (sighing) it was a great life I'll tell you. And when I was big enough now to run errands for my mother -- this is what she'd say -- "Now you go and visit the first grandma in the first little old log house," and she'd say, "and give her a pound of butter and give her a bannock or else give her a roast of beef." So here I was carrying the food there for the grandma -- being the errand girl -- Oh Lord! (Interview # 1, p. 14-15)

And my brother knew Alex very well so every so often he'd bring fish for Adolf and so one day Adolf says, "You know you like fish why don't you get some, it's nice fresh fish, you know." And then sometimes they'd bring smoked fish and I like that too! So that's how I come to meet Alex. Just kind of through this fish business. (Interview # 6, p. 63-66)

This was a regular hunting prayer. My mother-in-law, old grandma Calihoo, she gave me that to put on there (prayer on plaque mounted on large rock), you know, a long time ago she gave me this and I thought it would be wonderful. (Interview # 7, p. 71-73)

Here is the "The Spirit of the Buffalo" (Shows me a speech in a notebook). This is from when we were making the [buffalo] monument -- this is what I had to write. Everybody joined -- whoever knew something about the Spirit of the Buffalo because the buffalo is the most powerful animal eh, he's so big and strong. And he's survival -- because everybody hunted buffalo long ago, not just a few people, everybody ... (Interview # 1, p. 8)

The prayerful and spiritual lives of the characters in Dr. Anne's stories also brought forth many scenes of togetherness. These scenes of togetherness also reflected the interconnectedness of family, community, Cree culture, and nature ...

Long ago they never went to church, they never did anything, you know, but they prayed together, you know -- it was just togetherness -- and they prayed and the Spirit was always there. It was always something that could -- that would survive because it wasn't a forgotten thing -- it was always with them, with the Native people, you know. (Interview # 5, 57-61)

People would come for [grandma] all the time, you know. They'd be sick and she would grab this great big bag and away she'd go. And she'd look after the sick there. She'd boil medicines and she'd pray -- and she'd pray. (Interview # 8, p. 84-85)

It was lunch time and mother and dad weren't home, they were away somewhere and I was of course the baby sitter. And I was cooking and preparing the lunch. The boys had come in for lunch and we were all sitting at the table eating. We'd always say a prayer before lunch and we had just finished our little prayer and then we were starting to eat. (Interview # 8, 86-88)

Mother always took me [to the Lac St. Anne pilgrimage] because I was the older girl and she'd say, "You're always working so we'll take you to the pilgrimage." (Interview # 8, p. 83-84)

So -- anyway he came in, she brought him in, and she said to him, "Now what seems to be wrong?" And then she said to him, "What? -- This? -- This? -- This?" where she felt pain. And then she said, "I'll go make medicine for you." But her and her husband prayed, you know, and what I understood, part of it, what I understood, was she said, you know -- "Dear Creator, you know, my brother has

arrived and he is very sick. We need your help also I am depending on Mother Earth's medicines to help him." She put all these different medicines in a big kettle and she put it on the stove, she was, you know, praying at the same time with her husband and what I understood them to say was, "Please help us, we depend on you so much, we depend on Mother Earth because she provided the remedies." And it was so nice to hear them praying, you know, and they whispered, they whispered back and forth as they prayed ... (Interview # 5, p. 57-61)

My grandmother told me ... before they go hunting they all go together -- because there was always a Priest with them -- where they could pray ... (Interview # 1, p. 6-8)

Old grandma Calihoo she was 15 years old when she was old enough so she could go buffalo hunting, and they gave her a horse, and she often talks about that you know. And generally when they went it was a group, not just a small group, a big group and they all had a kind of little prayer meeting and she said they all got together. (Interview # 7, p. 71-73)

Scenes of togetherness were also created as Dr. Anne's story characters came together to honor, remember, and mourn those who had past on. Through these tellings the interconnections between family, community, Cree culture, and nature were again portrayed ...

And he [uncle] was quite sick all the time. He'd say, "I'm going soon." And my aunt would say, "Where do you think you're going?" And he'd say, "You know, I'll be gone to a place where there's no more sickness and no more pain." And that was when he died that he talked about this Poor aunty -- she started to cry. And I said, "He's thinking of you now. He's thinking that you'll live well." (Interview # 8, p. 82-83)

A lady friend of mine made this head dress and then we made a head there so we could put it up there. It cost pretty near \$300.00 but I was determined I was going to have one because my grandfather, my mother's father, was the chief and he used to wear a thing like that and it's a memory of him (silence). He was the chief of the Calahoo Reserve (silence). (Interview #2, p. 27-28)

My grandfather Gardnier is buried here -- further down, because that part of the city was opened up first, you know. My brother and I came here one day and we looked for it and we found it right away (silence). It's in this corner somewhere (silence). Sometimes we come here -- my brother -- and we clean it (slowly). The first time we came we could hardly see the name, you know, the writing was all -- so my brother brought some paint -- and painted it over (silence). (Interview # 5, p. 55)

"A Shared Scene Of Togetherness"

My Own Story About A Coming Together Of Family, Community, and Culture

On February 24, 1995 a celebration was held in Dr. Anne Anderson's honor. It had been just 21 days since Dr. Anne celebrated her 89th birthday with a quiet family dinner. Now, sitting in a banquet room at the Renaissance Inn among close to two hundred people, Dr. Anne once again prepared to honor and celebrate another phase of her ever evolving life. For it was here on this rainy winter night that Dr. Anne Anderson would formally retire from her 31 year long career of teaching, lecturing, and making public appearances.

At 89 years of age Dr. Anne was not abandoning her close knit ties with the Cree community. Nor was she straying from the Cree language and culture she had so fervently protected. This I know because I too shared in the scenes of this storytelling and what I saw and experienced at this most proud of celebrations was a reaffirming of the strengthening nature of Cree culture, community, and family. It was the interconnectedness of all three of these relationships which created these scenes of togetherness -- scenes which left a deep and lasting impression on me.

* * *

"Come, yes come, and bring your parents too! I'd like to visit with them." she sang with excitement.

Dr. Anne had just invited my family and I to her "Anderson Day Celebration". Honored by her invitation I assured her we would be there ...

* * *

The evening unfolded in a relaxed and welcoming manner. As the guests arrived they made their way over to the round head table where Dr. Anne sat with her husband Alex and other family members. Everyone wanted a chance to say hello to this inspirational Elder and in her own kind and easy way she held their hands and thanked them for joining together with her and her family for the celebration.

Sounds of togetherness floated through the room. Cree echoed around us, faces and mouths laughing, singing, and joking as the room filled with Dr. Anne's family and close friends -- a community of people she held close to her heart -- a community of people who were deeply connected by their cultural pride. Everyone seemed as one here -- sharing together in their pride for the Cree culture.

After the dinner people floated about casually. Some came forward to the microphone offering stories which quietly reflected the respect and gratitude they held for Dr. Anne and her community efforts to preserve the Cree language and culture. Some of the guests shared songs as their own way of honoring Dr. Anne as well as the Native pride which filled the room. These songs were accompanied by fiddles, guitars, spoons, and later in the evening -- drums.

Throughout the night there remained family and friends at Dr. Anne's side, kneeling next to her, whispering quietly, and nodding slowly as she spoke to them of things only they could tell of. One after another they came, myself included, to share of her wisdom and strength -- and to touch her softly creased hands with warmth and respect.

And so the night unfolded in this fashion. Family, friends, and cultural pride tightly woven into the fabric of Dr. Anne's celebration -- tightly woven into the fabric of her own

life -- a life lived within these scenes of togetherness.

Personal Insights

Dr. Anne's storytellings illuminate the scenes of togetherness which adorned her life. Her life-stories are told within a backdrop rich in family, community, Cree culture, and nature. This backdrop is the canvas upon which she paints her life pictures thus filling in the edges, of what would otherwise be isolated solitude, with scenes enriched with the embrace of that which makes her strong and whole. For Dr. Anne's stories reflect her keen awareness of the strengthening power found in a personal connectedness with family, community, culture, and nature. Dr. Anne clearly values these interconnections and holds them close to her heart as the medicine which gives her strength, gives her direction, and gives her a place within the scenes of something larger and more powerful than herself.

Dr. Anne's scenes of togetherness are a portrayal of her philosophy of health and healing. These narrative accounts mirror the personal value she places in experiencing a tightly knit relationship with her family, community, Cree culture, and nature. Through her story scenes Dr. Anne portrays these relationships as her own source of health and healing. And in telling of these healing relationships she paints a picture colored with the embrace of togetherness.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Native Elders are the wisdom-filled teachers of culture and tradition within Native communities. It is the Native Elders who model, and live in accordance with, the correct ways of achieving health and healing; by doing so they provide those around them with a sense of continuity and connectedness between their past, present, and future. This understanding, of a Native Elder's influential role within communities, formed the basis for this research study. By using the narrative inquiry approach -- that of studying the way a person experiences the world by examining their constructed storytellings -- I set out to study one Cree Elder's narrative storytellings. My purpose was to gain an understanding of this Elder's personal philosophy of health and healing by examining the way in which her philosophy was reflected in her stories about her traditional way of life. In other words, I looked at the way she constructed her life-stories and what these narrative tellings reflected about her philosophy of health and healing.

My examination of the way in which Dr. Anne Anderson-Irvine constructed her life-stories, and thereby reflected her health and healing philosophy, was directed by the storytelling elements of plot, characters, and scene. These narrative elements were used to give a natural organization to her life-stories which, in turn, allowed me to follow and analyze the threads which reflected her philosophy of health and healing.

The narrative element of plot was first used to organize Dr. Anne's life-stories into a past-present-future time sequence. This plotline allowed for a reflection of the way in which Dr. Anne viewed her past, present, and future -- and the elements within these time frames, those being her family, community, Cree culture, and nature -- as interconnected. Although the portrayal of her stories are structured within this thesis according to a more linear sequential concept of time, for ease of reading, it is my hope that Anne's sense of the

circularity of time is still captured and portrayed. Her circular-like storytelling portrays her past, present, and future as one indistinct frame of time thus reflecting the manner in which she lives within -- and tells of -- a merging and transcending of time. This past-present-future plotline also reflects the significant value Dr. Anne places in her interconnected generations as well as the cultural and traditional knowledge which these generations have shared with her. Dr. Anne's life-stories speak of these intergenerational relationships and the learnings she gained as a result of them; these are the sources of health and healing for Dr. Anne which have, in turn, provided her life with strength, meaning, and direction.

Narratives are rarely complete without characters and so consideration was also given to the significant characters in Dr. Anne's life-stories. An examination of Dr. Anne's relationships further revealed her health and healing philosophy. The life-stories she shared portrayed her mother, grandmother, aunt, Old Noel, the Spirit of the Buffalo, and the Creator as characters who inspired her with their knowledge, teachings, and wisdom. And so it was these characters who taught Dr. Anne their ancestral ways of achieving health and healing -- ways which, in turn, flowed through her own past-present-future -- all the while reminding her how to create health and healing within her own life. These characters were her teachers, mentors, and spirit guides who taught her of the healing medicine found in maintaining a close connectedness with family, community, Cree culture, and nature.

The scenes in Dr. Anne's life-stories are also reflective of her health and healing philosophy. Her stories are filled with scenes of togetherness whereupon the characters come together in an embrace of interconnectedness. This interconnection between family and community members is further entwined with Cree culture and nature. The interconnectedness of all of these healing elements makes for a nourishing 'web of life' which encircles Dr. Anne's past-present-future. It is this sense of togetherness and

connectedness with people, Cree culture, and nature which creates the circle of healing which embodies Dr. Anne's philosophy of health and healing.

While Dr. Anne's storytelling taught me about her personal philosophy of health and healing, her actions taught me about the true meaning of being a Native Elder. Throughout my research Dr. Anne showed great interest and enthusiasm in sharing of her cultural and traditional knowledge. Her immediate willingness to participate with me in this research also reflected the sense of importance she maintained for teaching her Cree heritage to the next generations. She also lived by, and showed respect for, the same values and ways of living as she told of within her stories. This congruence between her life-stories and her present way of life, as I saw it, gave me a sense of the connectedness and continuity between her past and present. Through her parallel past and present ways of living I gained a heightened awareness of this Elder's own sense of connectedness with her past, her people, and her Cree cultural traditions. In this fashion her health and healing philosophy was not only reflected through her life-stories but also through her actions and the values which they mirrored.

The health and healing philosophy explored in this study is one which is highly personalized since Dr. Anne's experiences and, in turn, her narrative storytelling are unique only to her. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the basic elements of her philosophy are uncommon to other perspectives held by other Native/First Nations people. Upon studying Dr. Anne's philosophy of health and healing, as well as outlining the traditional Native world view in my literature review, it seems as though these perspectives share in many of the same basic healing elements. That is to say, that while Dr. Anne's perspective may not be generalizable to the larger Native population, a context-bound extrapolation of her perspective -- that being perspectives held by other Native Elders -- may very well share in some similarities. Of course further narrative research into the health and healing philosophies of other Native Elders would add to the

validity of this statement. Future narrative inquiry using a similar design could also be employed in order to determine whether gender differences seem to influence health and healing perspectives amongst Native Elders. Further qualitative research contrasting Native health and healing values with the values held by dominant Canadian culture could provide more insight into the importance of learning from Native healing perspectives.

Native health and healing, from this context-bound view point, seems based upon having a sense of connectedness wherein the basic elements of health and healing come together as a life web which nourishes and strengthens. These basic healing elements include: a strong connection with family and community, that being in both present relationships as well as ancestral relationships from the past; a solid bond with Native culture, that being an understanding of one's Native language and traditions, a respect for the wisdom of Elders, and a belief in the Creator; as well as a close relationship with nature, that being one which demonstrates respect for the utilization of nature's life-sustaining offerings.

Within this life web it is believed a person can achieve a greater sense of health and healing as they are reminded that they are part of a larger whole; they are part of something more powerful than themselves -- just as a river gathers force as it joins at the mouth of other waters. Native health and healing from this perspective is about a transcendence, whereby the past comes together with the present in order to provide strength and vision for the future.

I will pause at this point in order to give consideration to the question -- how can I be sure that I did not miss something in capturing Dr. Anne's philosophy of health and healing? In response to this I would have to say that I do not think I can be completely sure, although I can claim to have captured her perspective based upon what she shared with me. After all, I am only able to base my interpretations upon my data; I cannot go beyond my data in search of something that did not exist within her stories. It therefore

seems more important to consider what was 'there' as opposed to what was 'not there'. The problem in attempting to judge what was 'not there' is that the researcher's assumptions are then seen to be directing the validity of the findings rather than allowing the participant's narrative to direct and validate the outcome.

This discussion directs me toward a final comment I would like to make regarding Dr. Anne's portrayal of the Creator, and more specifically, her portrayal of a personal health and healing philosophy. As with many mainstream generalizations, it could be all too easy to question why Dr. Anne's philosophy did not give a more explicit portrayal of the spiritual aspect of healing since this is an often noted component of Native healing. It is in reference to this point that I might be tempted to put on my researcher's hat in order to question whether I had somehow 'missed it'. I might ask myself if my method of data collection limited my findings. I might even question whether there was a missed communication or an unwillingness to share or receive of such information. On the other hand, I might decide -- just as I did -- that it is best when weighing these challenging considerations to look away from mainstream perceptions and to instead reflect upon my participant's narrative which, after all, is my only piece of evidence representative of *her* perspective. And in reflecting upon her narrative, it is with an eased conscience that I reply -- that although subtle, Dr. Anne's philosophy does seem comfortably embedded in the quiet folds of spirituality. In this respect, the element of spirituality is seemingly implicit in her storytelling, and philosophy, rather than explicit.

Limitations and Delimitations

The issue of this study's methodological limitations is now brought forth. Narrative inquiry, in the manner that it was employed within this study, offered insight into a highly personalized and specific perspective -- one which cannot be assumed the norm for all Native people. This narrative method served the purposes of this study very well,

in that I was able to learn about Dr. Anne's personal philosophy of health and healing. Limitations, however, come into play as one considers the transferability of this perspective to other individuals. It therefore must be emphasized that while some similarities may exist between Dr. Anne's philosophy and the traditional Native world view, outlined in the literature review, it is at the same time impossible to make unfounded and broad-sweeping generalizations.

A further methodological limitation arises out of the subjective nature of narrative inquiry. The narrative researcher brings their intuition, and therefore their own impressions, into the research process. Attempts must then be made to prove the confirmability of results rather than the objectivity of them, since pure neutrality is not obtainable. In recognition of this methodological limitation, I attempted to achieve confirmability of Dr. Anne's perspective by providing a detailed account of my research and analysis procedures, by supplying background information on myself and my perspectives, and by openly discussing the limitations of the narrative inquiry approach in relation to this study.

A methodological delimitation also needs to be emphasized here since research beckons the questioning of the internal validity of findings, otherwise known as the truth value. Once again the philosophical, and therefore subjective nature of narrative inquiry, requires the setting of boundaries around the concept of 'truth' in regards to my research findings. These boundaries are necessary since narrative inquiry produces perspective rather than absolute truth. In light of this, I must again emphasize that my account of Dr. Anne's philosophy is what I believe to be a credible and reasonably accurate perspective rather than an absolute truth.

Implications For Practice

Having said all of this, I will now make the cautious leap required of researchers as they consider the implications of their findings within the framework of practice. Broadly

speaking, the health and healing philosophy reflected within this study encourages a return to the traditional values and beliefs of family, community, culture, and nature. At a time when the dominant Canadian culture seems to be in search of a 'new' healing paradigm it seems almost coincidental that a centuries old healing philosophy built upon the traditional 'tried and true' foundations of Native logic exists within our seemingly blinded grasp. That is to say, it is possible that in our search for new technologies we have lost sight of the very basics capable of supplying us with the same end -- that being health and healing.

The Native perspective studied within has specific implications for the practice of health and healing within the dominant Canadian culture. Like Dr. Anne's own circle of healing, we need to re-learn and promote the value of supportive relationships, both with family and community. We also need to strengthen our sense of cultural identity, whatever it may be, by learning and practicing our own ancestral traditions. Nature has a wealth of teaching and healing to share with us as well -- if we would only pause long enough to listen and learn. These basic elements of health and healing can provide a circle of connectedness which grounds and supports us in our ever fragmented lives.

These same implications hold true in the professional practice of counselling. For counsellors utilizing any type of therapy, client health and healing would most likely be increased if clients were encouraged to foster a similar circle of connectedness within their own lives. With the healing embrace of family, community, culture, and nature supporting them, clients might then be better able to find their sought after place within the scenes of their own life-stories.

And with the gentle breeze caressing our faces

And her soft skilled mouth full of life

We waded together ... through the storylines of yesterday

As the encircling embrace of the tellings whispered of the moment

And then lapped quietly upon the shores of tomorrow.

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APPENDIX

DR. ANNE ANDERSON'S COPYRIGHTED BOOKS

These books are available through "Cree Productions" located at:

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The First Metis: A New Nation
History of Herbalism

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